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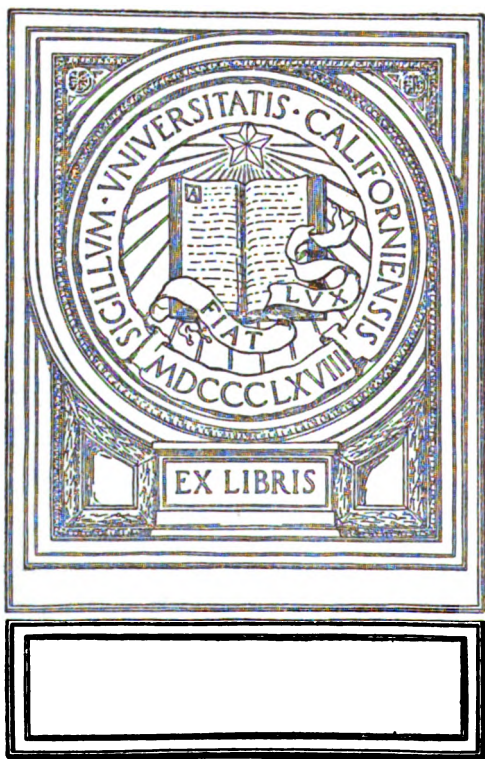
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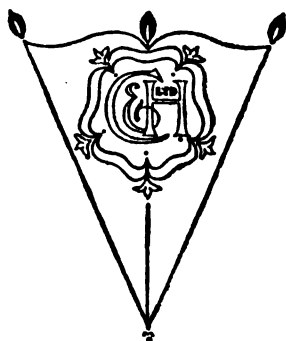
# **THE MODEL SETTLEMENT**





**PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF  
THIRTY YEARS' RESIDENCE IN  
THE MODEL SETTLEMENT  
SHANGHAI, 1870-1900**

**BY  
CHARLES M. DYCE**



**LONDON  
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# INTRODUCTORY



# THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

"You see the dish, whereon that royal joint  
Reposeth like an Emperor. Mark well its pattern;  
Some far Eastern scene, where trees bear footballs,  
And pagodas rise, and birds kiss in mid air.  
That willow pattern plate recalls my youth. . . ."

*Old Play.*

**W**HEN it became known to my relations and friends in the early sixties, that I had an appointment in a big China house of business in London, I was warmly congratulated by them all. They said that I was a very lucky lad, and that my fortune was as good as made.

At this period the reputation of the China trade stood very high. It was well known that during the previous fifteen or twenty years large fortunes had been made, and made easily. After the China War of 1840-1842, the cession of



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Hong Kong to the British and the opening of the free Treaty Ports of Shanghai, Ningpo, Foo-chow, Amoy, and Canton to foreign trade, under the Treaty of Nanking, had given a great and continuous impetus to commercial enterprise. The opportunity had been freely taken advantage of by young Englishmen ;\* the bulk of whom succeeded in business so well that Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports rose from nothing to be very considerable centres of trade in a short period ; and this in spite of the Taiping Rebellion and another war with China in 1858-1860.

It seems to me, looking back on that period, that it was chiefly the latter consideration, namely, the rapidity of the growth of the trade and the easy way in which fortunes were made, which cast such a glamour over all our ideas. In the minds of the younger generation the great rebellion and the war were also attractions, and cast a feeling of romance over the trade carried on under such conditions. There seemed a prospect of adventure in going to China as a clerk in a mercantile house ; I am not sure that some of us did not read the

\* I use the word Englishmen to mean the inhabitants of the United Kingdom for convenience only ; not out of any disrespect to Scottish, Irish, or Welsh. We have no word to name a member of our somewhat mixed race.

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lives of Clive and Warren Hastings, and dream of glorious possibilities on similar lines. Then there were the material facts. We used to see youngsters like ourselves, with no money, no influence, and no experience, go out to China : and very often we would see them return in a few years, in affluent circumstances and in good positions. And much more than that, their few years in China had placed them as much above us who had remained behind, in all that constitutes a man of the world, as we ourselves were above the boys we had left at school. The mere fact that they had been abroad, and had gained knowledge of those mysterious and turbulent parts of the world, gave them the right to speak with confidence, and the power to speak with ease to their elders ; before whom, only three or four short years ago they would have sat silent, or at any rate, modestly reticent. When I add to this, that these young men were magnificently attired, and seemed to have all grown handsome and well set up, you may understand that the feelings of us who had remained in England, were a compound of admiration, profound respect, and a thoroughly honest envy and desire to become like unto them.

When, therefore, at the age of about seventeen, I got this appointment, I thought myself, as all

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my friends did, most fortunate. I had a feeling of exaltation. I seemed to walk on air. Here, indeed, was life opening out to me, and life in its most fascinating form. Here was an end to boyhood ; I was now to become a man : and with the happy confidence of youth, I never for a moment doubted my capacity to behave as such. This feeling of exaltation, however, did not last long ; I soon found that I had a long period of prosaic drudgery and hard work to go through, before I became fit for anything.

By appointment, on a certain Monday morning in October, 1863, I betook myself to the city of London, and presented myself at the office of the China house which was situated in Broad Street. After an interval on a chair in the office, I was very kindly received by the head partner, to whom I was personally known. He did not keep me long, but saying that he would make a man of me, handed me over to the chief clerk. A desk and stool were presently found for me, and I had leisure to contemplate the place and surroundings where I was destined to pass the next six and a half years of my life.

A short description of the establishment will not be amiss. There were three partners who sat in private offices. There was a chief clerk, who signed per pro, and who had his desk railed

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off from the general office, but not separate from it. All the others were in a roomy general office. They consisted of four or five permanent clerks, a book-keeper, correspondents and general utility men ; besides these were four or five youngsters like myself, who were there to learn business. They were, as the Chinese inventor of that curious lingo I was to know more about in after days would have called them *larn pidgins*, and were not supposed to be permanent, but looking forward to be sent abroad. I was informed by them that the vacancy I had filled was caused by the departure of one of them to Shanghai, as silk inspector to one of the big firms there. I dreamily wondered how long it would be before this fortunate youth would come back as a glorious creature such as those I had seen.

Nothing of any interest took place for the next twelve months. I went to the office every morning at nine o'clock, and spent the day learning business, with a monotonous regularity and with more or less success. The only feature that dwells in my memory at this time was my poverty. My income was barely £100 a year ; and by the strictest economy I could not make it do. I was always in debt to my tailor and bootmaker who, worthy creatures, did not press unduly for payment.

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After about a year, the chief clerk asked me one day if I did not want to learn Silk. He explained to me that he thought I had spent enough time in copying out invoices and account sales, and that I ought to learn more of the essentials of the trade, and that if I possessed a good knowledge of silk, it might enable me to get an appointment as silk inspector at good pay; that at any rate it would do no harm to learn.

*Learning silk* was accomplished in this way. We went to the warehouses in Cutler Street every morning, at between eight and nine o'clock, whenever there was any silk *on show*. The raw silk was placed on show so that it could be inspected by the owners and by the trade, as soon after the arrival of the China mail as possible, and it remained on show for a stated time. One bale out of every *run* \* was opened, and four *books* † out of the bale were placed on the table at the silk window. When we arrived at the warehouses, one of the assistants was told off who brought up the four books. Our business was to inspect them, and to decide from the colour, quality, size, and other points what the classification was. We had to learn the different varieties

\* A *run* of raw silk is a variable number of bales of a grade, or, as it is called, of a chop.

† A *book* of China silk is a bundle, packed in a special way.

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of silk, and to study the Chinese chop papers. The four books were then taken away, and four others out of a bale from another run were brought up, until we had gone through the mail. We spent the best part of an hour every morning *looking at silk*.

It was an interesting pursuit, and would have been much more so if we could have detected any progress in our knowledge of the quality of the silk itself. For though we gradually learned to know the difference between the varieties of the article, between Tsatlees and the various kinds of Taysaam, for example, we never seemed to be able to tell one quality of Tsatlee from another. They all looked alike, or nearly so, and though we gradually got to know a really inferior Tsatlee from an ordinary market one, it was months, and even years, before we could tell the difference between the finer sorts. All the same, during that long period we were insensibly acquiring the knowledge, and at last, quite suddenly, scales seemed to drop from our eyes, and we saw silk as it really is. Our education was then nearing completion.

The other method of learning Silk is to spend one or two years in a mill. By doing this, no doubt, a practical knowledge is acquired. The learner sees what the silk is used for and how it

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is worked. But I think that, on the whole, the warehouse system lays a better ground-work. In a mill you only see three or four, or perhaps five, kinds of raw silk being worked, and your ideas are cramped. In the warehouses you see every kind, and the extended time you are learning (three or four years) allows the appreciation of the article to soak into your system and to be thoroughly absorbed. The best plan, no doubt, would be, after the four years' course at the warehouses, to spend a year in a throwing mill.

When I had been with the firm two or three years the book-keeper suddenly died. I had been assisting him for some time previously, and as there was some difficulty in getting a new book-keeper, I was asked by the chief clerk if I would undertake the books for a time, "Though," he said, "I doubt if you are competent to do it." There is a considerable difference between writing up the day-book and journal as assistant to a book-keeper and actually taking charge of the books of a big concern; however, whatever my faults were at this period, want of self-confidence was not one of them, and I gladly undertook the task. Later on, when I was attacking the ledger, certain misgivings overtook me, the double entry system appeared to contain mysterious difficulties, as of some occult art, and I feared that I might

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go wrong through inexperience. So I asked the advice of one of the permanent clerks as to how it should be done. "My boy," said he, "if you get all the amounts into the ledger on both sides, I don't think it matters much how you do it." Greatly encouraged by this practical way of looking at it, I tackled the ledger, and though my first six months' entries and balance would have probably shocked a professional accountant, the thing was done. Striking the balance was, of course, the trouble, and one evening when I was exploring the sheet for mistakes, and chasing up and down the columns, the head partner came to me to cheer me up, breathing heavily and saying that my pursuit was as good as fox-hunting.

Startling events were about to occur in the China business world; and my book-keeping during the next few years gave me the opportunity of seeing much of the inside of what was taking place. Rumours had been about for some time that things were not well with the China trade; and presently the mail brought news of the failure of a big China house, followed almost immediately by that of some others. These firms we only knew by name: it did not seem to occur to us that our own constituents could be in any danger; our faith in their stability was too great. So that when at length it was announced that one



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of our own big constituents, with the head office at home, and branches all over China, had failed, the news came like a thunderbolt, and we thought the end of all things had arrived.

We had barely recovered from the effects of this catastrophe when, about a year later, the second of our big constituents also failed. Our business was now thoroughly disorganized ; and until the arrangements were completed for continuing these vast transactions under new conditions, we youngsters had a very easy time in the office—in fact, we had little or nothing to do. Not that we cared very much ; at that age a period of idleness never comes very much amiss. But in one respect the situation filled us with uneasiness. The failure of these two big firms seemed to destroy, or at least minimize, our chances of getting out to China for some time to come. In the ordinary way there was a steady demand for youngsters to proceed to the East, from these firms ; and we were specially trained to meet their wants. But this demand had ceased. As for me, I was filled with despair. All my ambitions seemed to have been upset, and I feared that I might sink permanently into the *rôle* of book-keeper in the London house. This was not by any means what I desired. I saw my contemporaries at the warehouses, whom I used

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to meet learning silk, Cromie, Howie, Sim, etc., one after the other getting billets, and going off to Shanghai : they were in other houses, and got their chance. There seemed also to be a falling off in the demand for silk inspectors, owing to the depressed state of the silk trade ; and I was advised by a friend to learn Tea as a second string.

The fact of Sim's getting a billet in front of me filled my cup with bitterness, because he was my junior at the warehouses, and I should have had the offer. I consulted one of the permanent clerks, who was always my very good friend, on the subject. "I think," he said, "it may be it is because you are book-keeper here, and they do not think of you, having the idea that you do not want to go out. You see," he continued, "it may be that a firm who wants a chap to go to China thinks twice before he tries to get hold of our book-keeper : he might think it was like enticing you away—it might look mean to the firm here. If I were you, I would let it be known that you are able and willing to go." This was an entirely new view to me, but it seemed a correct one : the advice also seemed good, and I followed it. But nothing whatever came of it.

I now gradually fell into a very disturbed

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state of mind. I saw no chance of getting out to China, and in that case what was to become of me? Stay where I was, as a permanency, I simply would not. I cast round on all sides for means of getting a billet in China; but every chance seemed barred, and, in proportion to my failure, my longing to escape increased. I do not know what are the feelings of a caged bird, or of a dog chained to his kennel, or of any beast in captivity, but I could imagine them at this time. I was filled with a kind of rage as I considered my position and prospects. I used to gaze at the middle-aged book-keepers and correspondents of the firms known to me, plodding along like mill-horses on about £250 a year; and used to vaguely wonder if I should become like them. I was also miserably poor.

At length, early in the year 1870, the great event occurred. I was offered a position in Shanghai, not as silk inspector, but as book-keeper and general assistant. The fact that it was not that of silk inspector was a little disappointing, but it was quite enough for me that I was to go, and I positively jumped at it.

I mentioned previously that when I got the appointment in 1863 which I was now to quit, I had a feeling of exaltation. That same feeling now returned, but much intensified. On the

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evening of the day of this great news, I went to a kind of *conversazione*, a bazaar in aid of some charity ; and the assembly appeared to me a trivial affair, though it was much as such things are. It was my own state which altered the point of view. I felt that with my exalted destiny there would be no more *conversaciones* of this kind. At the office, one of my fellow-pilgrims made some flippant and rather rude remark. I did not reply in kind as was my wont, but only smiled superior, thinking to myself, "Aha, I am going to the East. Nothing of this kind matters now."



# THE GORGEOUS EAST



## CHAPTER II

### THE GORGEOUS EAST

"Here he comes, and there he goes,  
The Chinee man with the monkee nose."

*Early Victorian Ballad.*

"And we daintily feasted on birds'-nests and snails,  
And peculs, and catties, and maces, and tael."

*Ascribed to E. C. BABER.*

**B**EHOLD me, at length, one evening in March, 1870, starting from Victoria station *en route* for Marseilles, where I was to embark on the P. & O. Co.'s steamer *Bangalore*.

I had been informed at the office of the P. & O. that the steamer was quite full; and I had learned from various friends that this was the *Tea Mail*, that is, that all the Tea-men who had come home after last season were now returning to open the new one. And sure enough, in the trains both from Calais to Paris and from Paris to Marseilles, I found my future fellow-residents almost in swarms. I soon got acquainted with several of them. As soon as it was known that I was going



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to Shanghai as a *Griffin*,\* friendly sympathy was at once established, and when I told them the name of the firm I was going to, they warmed even more, saying that both my *tai-pans*† were right good fellows.

The *Bangalore* was a comparatively small boat, and she was crammed full. We were four in a rather small cabin, and as the weather in the Mediterranean was very rough we were all very uncomfortable. The great bulk of the passengers were for China, upwards of sixty being for that destination; and the majority of these were Tea-men or Cha-sees,‡ as I now learned they were called. The Cha-sees *talked shop* incessantly, and I heard more about tea during that voyage than I had ever heard before.

The Suez Canal had been opened officially about six months before, but it was not yet open to traffic. We were, therefore, all transported by rail from Alexandria to Suez, where we got on board the *Mongolia*. This was a fine big steamer,

\* Griffins. The name given to the China ponies which are sent down from Mongolia to Shanghai for sale. They always arrive in a semi-wild, unkempt, and ragged state. The name is given also to human new arrivals, because, I imagine, their mental condition is supposed to be similar to the ponies' appearance.

† Tai-pan, in Chinese, means "first rank," and is always used by foreigners to denote the chief of a house of business.

‡ Cha-see means, in Chinese, "one skilled in tea."

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and we now enjoyed a comfortable and even luxurious life. At Point de Galle we were again shifted to the *Emeu*, which took us as far as Hong Kong ; and there we were once more changed to the *Aden*, which completed the voyage to Shanghai.

Hong Kong was hot and steamy, but picturesque and romantic. Our steamer was surrounded almost entirely by native craft of all sorts, and we had a good view of the famous boat population of China. The women, most of them with babies on their backs, seemed to do most of the work on these boats, and, all things considered, they were not ill-looking.

The 9th May, 1870, at daybreak, found us steaming up the estuary of the Yang-tsze. It was pelting with rain, and very cold. Nothing was to be seen except dirty-looking yellow water all round us, and an occasional junk or fishing-boat shouldering along. I had come on deck in my pyjamas to get a glimpse of my adopted country, but there was no encouragement to stay on deck, so I went below to dress. When next I came up, we were just turning into the River Hwang-poo, at Woosung.

The view was the reverse of exhilarating. The rain continued, and the village of Woosung looked squalid and miserable ; the Chinamen on shore seemed a most degraded crowd, most of

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them in rags and very dirty ; the native shipping looked ill-found and disreputable ; and the low banks of the river, with here and there some dismal trees, looked melancholy in the extreme. This unfavourable impression was doubtless caused to a large extent by the weather, which was in marked contrast to what we had had during the voyage. But, all the same, when I next visited Woosung, in brilliant sunshine, I found the squalor and dirt were quite real, compared to which Hong Kong seemed absolute cleanliness.

The Hwang-poo is a tributary of the Yangtze, and Shanghai is situated about thirteen miles up the Hwang-poo. We reached the P. & O. buoy at about eight o'clock, and made fast at once. One of my tai-pans came off for me in a sampan, and took me ashore forthwith. It was still raining hard and quite cold, and when we got to the *hong* there were fires burning in the grates, which much surprised me after all I had heard of the tropical heat of Shanghai. My tai-pan informed me that he had already engaged a *boy* for me, and that he would go off to the steamer and get all my luggage landed. Meantime, he (the tai-pan) was going to the office ; he recommended me to go to my bedroom and make myself comfortable until my luggage arrived ; then unpack it and send my dirty linen to the wash.

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"And breakfast," he said, "at twelve sharp. You will hear the gong." He then conducted me to my bedroom, summoned my boy, and left me.

The bedroom seemed to me to be of vast size, and it really was very large. There was a cheerful fire blazing in the grate. There were three French windows, and on looking out I saw that there was a wooden verandah running the entire length of the house. I turned to my boy who was standing quite still. He was a clean-looking Chinaman, clad in a long blue gown which reached to his ankles, and with a little round black cap with a red button on the top, on his head. He spoke to me; what he meant I had no idea, but I knew he was speaking English because I recognized some words. He then said something else, and finding that I still did not understand he began to make signs. I shook my head in despair, at which he abruptly left the room. He had been talking *pidgin*.

I saw no more of him until my baggage arrived. He took my keys, stripped off his blue gown, and set about unpacking in a most workmanlike way. He first took the clothes-bag and emptied the contents on the floor. He said something about "Washee," and pointed to a small writing-desk which stood in a corner. I

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perceived that I was to make a list. He then began counting the shirts, and said at last, "Thirty-two piecee white shirts, b'long." He then counted the collars, handkerchiefs, and all the articles, giving me the total number of "piecee," and in every case adding the word "b'long." When he had finished he tied them all up in a neat bundle, and departed with it and my list. I sat down to consider what the word "b'long" meant. I had a vague notion that it might be the French word "blanc," but that would not do, because he used it with regard to coloured articles as well as to white. I determined to ask my tai-pan.

By this time it was getting on towards noon, and my boy came back with hot water, and made several more incomprehensible remarks. He was a nice-looking boy, and I liked him very much, particularly admiring the skill with which he took out my clothes from the trunks and arranged them in apple-pie order in the wardrobe, chest of drawers, and dressing-table. Whilst he was still engaged in these duties, the gong sounded in the hall, and the boy uttered the remarkable words, "Buggyfust lady." \* This I understood, and I preceded him to the dining-room convulsed with mirth.

\* Breakfast ready.

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I found both my tai-pans waiting, and we sat down to the best meal I had ever tasted in my life; not only that, but I can say with truth that I have never since eaten a better one. This may seem a strong statement, but I believe that every one who has lived in China will endorse it.

First, there was a slice of boiled sam-lye with cucumber. This fish is the shad; but when the sam-lye is in season in Shanghai, in May and early June, it has a flavour so delicate that it far surpasses the shad as it is eaten in New York. This was followed by spring snipe roasted; and this was also very superior to any snipe I have ever seen elsewhere. Then a most excellent beef-steak, and that was all. It was simple, but unsurpassed in quality.

The way it was served, also, left nothing to be desired, and the table appointments were appropriate and good. The room was of a moderate size, but not small; it had two French windows facing the south. The carpets were up, but the floor was polished a deep luminous brown, the result of the matchless Ningpo varnish. The furniture was good solid English mahogany, and the effect was enriched very much by four Cantonese blackwood *teapoys* with marble tops, and also by a pair of handsome blue and white

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Nanking vases\* on the mantelpiece, and other curios about the room.

On inquiring about the mysterious word "b'long" I learnt that it is the English "belong," and means in pidgin, "it is" or "there are," and that "have got" is often used instead of it.

At one o'clock sharp they rose from the table, and went to the office, I going with them. I was not supposed to tackle to on the first day; but my desk was allotted to me, and I was shown over the office and the silk-room. It was the slack time in business, and very little was going on. I had several friends in Shanghai, mostly young men I had known in London; and during the afternoon several of them called to see me. One of them proposed a walk at about five; and, the rain having stopped, we started forth. Before going my tai-pan said they had a "few young friends" coming to dinner, at 7.30, and that we should dress.

We walked through the settlement along the Maloo Road into the country as far as the Bubbling Well, which is three miles from the Bund. The main feature of the walk was the

\* At this period magnificent specimens of porcelain, genuine *Kang-shu* and *Kien-lung*, could be purchased for a comparatively trifling sum. A vase could be bought for about thirty taels (say £10), which is worth to-day, at Christies', over £100.

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mud, which owing to imperfect metalling of the roads, or the nature of the soil, was particularly slushy. As a walk it was not a success, but, as my friend said, "it was good exercise, and would shake up our livers."

On returning to the Hong to dress, I found my boy had laid out my clothes all ready for me. He remained with me nearly all the time I was dressing, offering to assist me. I think he was quite ready and competent to have put on my clothes for me. I learned from him that there were "eight piecee man dinner." He called my evening clothes my "dinner clothes." He spoke of the "dinner room" and the "sit down room." And finally he asked "what tim' you wantchee tea morning tim'."

I proceeded to the "sit down room" where the guests were assembling. They were all men, and all old residents, comparatively; but they were most cordial, and welcomed me as a Griffin to Shanghai. I naturally could not take much part in the conversation, as it mostly ran on subjects quite strange to me; and they used a certain number of pidgin words even in their conversation one with another, which occasionally made it a little difficult for me to follow them. The word *Maskee* came in pretty frequently, also *Man man* and *Chop chop*, and such strange words



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as *Cumshaw*, *Bobbery*, and *Wyløe* fell on my ears in the course of the evening.

After dinner, most of the party sat down to a game of cards. The game was Loo. I did not take a hand, nor was I expected to do so. With one of the party who also stood out, I watched the play over a cigar. The stakes I saw were pretty high, and this, no doubt, was the reason I was not asked to join. I might very easily have lost six months' salary on my first evening in China.

Feeling rather tired with the day's excitement, I retired early, and left them over the game. Thus ended my first day in Shanghai. I have detailed the events with some prolixity ; all the same I hope the record will not be found tedious.

# THE MODEL SETTLEMENT



## CHAPTER III

### THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

"We are the people."—*Motto of the Shanghai Bowling Alley.*

AT this period, the foreign, *i.e.* the non-Chinese population, of the settlement was, compared to what it is now, quite small. The census of 1870, taken 30th June, gives a total of 1666, of which 894 were British, and as it is an interesting document, I reproduce it. It does not include the French concession :

British	...	...	...	...	...	894
Japanese	...	...	...	...	...	7
Portuguese	...	...	...	...	...	104
American	...	...	...	...	...	255
Spanish	...	...	...	...	...	46
German	...	...	...	...	...	138
French	...	...	...	...	...	16
Danish	...	...	...	...	...	9
Austrian	...	...	...	...	...	7
Italian	...	...	...	...	...	5
Swedish	...	...	...	...	...	8
Dutch	...	...	...	...	...	5

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Carried forward ... 1494

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

					Brought forward	...	1494
Swiss	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
Greek	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Norwegian	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Belgian	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Brazilian	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Other nationalities, including Indians, Malay, etc.							155
							<hr/> 1666

Deducting 155 Indians, Malays, etc., and 104 Portuguese, who were mostly Eurasians from Macao, it will be seen that the white population was just about 1400. These were nearly all men, the proportion of women and children at this time being comparatively small.

The great bulk of the residents were British, the only other important nationalities were American and German. The community was almost entirely commercial, the only exception being the missionaries. The Consular body existed chiefly for regulating trade, and, of course, all the other members of the community, besides the merchants and their assistants, were there to supply in one form or another the wants of the trade.

The mercantile establishments were called *Hongs*. The word Hong means in Chinese a row of buildings, and it came to mean the collection of buildings necessary to carry on a business. Though varying to a certain extent in details and in size, all foreign hongs had a strong likeness one

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

to another, because they had all to be built to supply the same kind of wants. They all stood in their own compounds, enclosed by a wall ; and the compounds varied in extent from one acre to two or three.

The important building was the dwelling house, which usually stood in the front part of the compound. It was built in a very solid fashion, with thick walls, and usually with a verandah running all round it both on the ground floor and storey above. The number of rooms varied. As a rule the mercantile offices were all in this building, the spacious verandahs being often enclosed and utilized as offices. The rest of the house was taken up with dwelling-rooms and bedrooms. The kitchen and servants' quarters were always quite apart in a building behind, but connected with the house by a covered way. At the sides of the compound, but generally thrown back a little, were the godowns (warehouses), including tea godown, silk godown, and piece goods godown. The offices and dwellings of the Compradore and Shroffs,\* and all the Chinese mercantile assistants, were arranged round about the godowns. In

\* Shroff is the name given to the men who shroff the dollars ; that is, whose business is to find out by touch the light dollars and the bad ones.

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

most of the hong, but not in all, there were at this time also stables and mafoo's quarters. In the case of the large firms, in addition to the main dwelling-house, there was an *annexe*, quite separate from it, with a separate entrance. In this building the assistants would live and have their mess, which was styled the junior mess, the partners occupying the main building, and being called the senior mess, both being served by the same kitchen.

When these buildings were erected, in the early days of Shanghai as an open treaty port, there were no foreign architects; and the plans had to be drawn by the merchants themselves, with the assistance presumably of the Chinese architect or contractor. Probably the whole thing was managed by the compradore. The design of these buildings was therefore simple in the extreme. It was usually a square or nearly square building, with the entrance facing the road, and with the main passage or hall running right through the house to the back. At right angles there would be two passages running right and left, making four passages in the shape of a cross. The staircase would occupy the centre of this cross, the ascent usually commencing forward of the intersection, and doubling to the upper story.

There were four rooms, one at each corner of the building, the size varying with the size of the

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

house, but usually very large. On the upper story were also four rooms, the main difference between the upper story and the lower being that parts of the passages were used for bath-rooms. All round, both upper and lower, ran a roomy verandah built of brick with open arches.

This style of architecture required plenty of space, but that was available. Expense was no object; and, taking it as a whole, it was simple, and even grand in its simplicity; and certainly most comfortable, so that it was probably much more suitable to what was required than any professional architect could have designed. It was christened by some wag the *compradoric* style; and a typical example of the style was the Hwa-shing Hong in the Peking Road.

Each hong stood in its own compound; and there were usually two gates, with a carriage drive to the front door, one gate for entry and the other for exit. There was a flower-garden, with roses and many varieties of English flowers which grow well in Shanghai. In addition to these there were many of the semi-tropical plants and flowers such as flowering aloes, yuccas, and various palms; and wistaria in great luxuriance. The magnolia and tulip tree were generally found there, and occasionally a salisburia, so that the approach to the houses in the spring was very picturesque.



## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

The number of people in each hong varied, naturally, according to the size of the firm. In the big hong there would be two or three partners, and five up to ten or more European clerks. Besides them, there were in many cases Portuguese clerks, but they never lived in the hong. As for the native staff, it is difficult, after so long a time, to estimate their number ; but in a big hong containing, say, three partners and ten clerks, the number must have been near fifty. So that a big hong was a small town of itself.

It was and still is, under the altered conditions, the jolly custom to exercise a free-and-easy hospitality in the way of asking a friend in to breakfast (or, as it is now called, tiffin) or to dinner, half an hour, or even less, before the time appointed for the meal. In small messes this system caused no inconvenience ; the houseboy is a man of unbounded resource, and, unless he is called upon to perform the impossible, he may be relied on. If, for example, in a mess of four, he is suddenly told there are " eight piecee man breakfast," the breakfast will be there, and with little or no delay. But in the big messes the system broke down, not, I think, from any incompetence on the part of the boys, but because, in a mess of say ten, if every one asked a guest, the glasses, plates, knives and forks, and even chairs, might

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

be found wanting at the critical moment, and cause awkwardness. But if the boy had even so short notice as half an hour, he would be equal to any emergency ; for he would ransack all the neighbouring hongs and carry off all the crockery, glass, and furniture he wanted, with the full connivance of his fellow-boys.

It was, presumably, on this account that the big messes did not, as a rule, ask their friends to *pot luck* ; instead of this there was substituted what were called guest nights once or twice a week. On such nights every member of the mess had the privilege, subject to arrangement with the head of the mess, of inviting a friend ; and the plan worked fairly well. It did away, of course, with the friendly system before alluded to. But the real fact is that these big messes were a mistake ; and the best proof of that is that they were, one after the other, broken up.

While they lasted, however, they were of great benefit to us youngsters ; for they enabled us to become acquainted with the older men, and to make real friends of men whom we should never have met in any other way. For I, as a griffin, would be invited by a friend in the big mess, who was also a griffin, though possibly, from six months' longer residence, not quite so wild ; and during that dinner we were placed, with much courtesy,

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

on an equality with our seniors. In a state of society such as existed at Shanghai at that time, it was entirely bad for a youngster to drift into any particular set of men of his own age.

Another great advantage for a youngster was, if he had the luck to be asked, to go into ladies' society. The number of ladies in Shanghai was exceedingly small, and as young men were, comparatively, very numerous, it was impossible for all of them to do so. It was only a favoured few. At the same time it must be admitted, that the great majority of young men did not desire it; they preferred the society of their own sex to such an extent that they felt uncomfortable if, by any chance, they had to sit next to a lady at dinner. I am not exaggerating; I knew several men, who were witty and perfectly well-behaved in the society of men; but who, from never meeting ladies for a lengthened period, were gauche, ill at ease, and almost dumb, when a lady was present.

The census of 1870 does not give the number of female residents, but the fact of there being very few, was advertised to the fullest extent whenever a public ball was given. It is no exaggeration to say that there were at least five men for every lady; and the dancing men had an arduous struggle to secure partners.

# MY FELLOW-RESIDENTS



## CHAPTER IV

### MY FELLOW-RESIDENTS

"Populous cities please me now,  
And the busy hum of men."

MILTON.

ONE of my earliest impressions of my fellow-residents was that there were a large number of Scotchmen. Every other man I met seemed to be of that nationality. The fact came upon me as a surprise ; and though my life at this time was a period of surprises, it made more impression upon me than it seemed to warrant. But I think the reason is that I had never before met the real Scotchman.

Though I am myself Scotch (Aberdeen), I was brought up in the West of England, a district more remote from Scotland and things Scottish than any other part of the United Kingdom. I had been once to visit my Scotch relations in Aberdeen, and had spent a short time there ; and I knew a fair number of Scotchmen very well in

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

London. But for some reason or another, the Scotch of Shanghai seemed to be totally different from those I had known at home. It is possible that the ones I had met in London were somewhat, shall I say, toned down ; or it may be that their comparative scarcity was the cause of no great impression being made. But in Shanghai, the great number, the obtrusive accent or accents, and a certain assertiveness (not offensive), combined to give the sense of a pervading presence of the nationality. It seemed that though they were domiciled in China, their feet, so to speak, were on their native heath. I do not intend by these remarks to say one word in disparagement of my countrymen in Shanghai ; I found them, with scarcely an exception, kindly, full of humour, and shrewd ; and the bulk of my intimate friends were Scotch.

The assertiveness was quite harmless, and chiefly consisted in ramming the kingdom of Scotland down our throats on every possible occasion. They would have us believe that the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom were the most intelligent, enterprising, and capable people in the British Empire. Of course the rest of the world did not count. I will do them the justice to say that they did not put forward their countrymen as models of sobriety.

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

The accent was, doubtless, the chief factor in emphasizing the preponderance of the Sandies ; and they appeared to take pleasure in talking to each other in broad Scotch. In many cases they could not speak anything else, such of them for example, as had come to Shanghai direct from Scotland ; but others, who had had a long training in London before coming to the East, might have been expected to have, more or less, Anglicized their accent. It was not so all the same ; and it gave me a mild shock when I heard the manager of one of the banks "quotting" the rates of Exchange.

In the case of a few of the young Scots who came direct from their own country, it was often difficult to understand what they said, so broad was their accent. These youngsters were the *wildest* of all the Griffins ; and the Englishmen used to relate, as if it were a matter of fact, that they were caught wild on their native hillsides, and after having had a pair of trousers put on by force, they were tied up and carried off to Glasgow, where they were chained to their desks and made to write out invoices until they were tame.

I found my countrymen to be for the most part musical. Scotland is renowned as a land of song, and these sons of Scotia did not belie the reputation. I do not mean that they were learned



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musicians, or that they much appreciated Schubert, Beethoven, or Handel, but they nearly all could sing the songs of Scotland ; and could sing them well. Shortly after my arrival I went to a dinner-party given by a Scottish mess, at which three parts of the company were Scotch. After dinner we did not leave the table to join the ladies, because there were no ladies ; but the head of the mess passed round the claret and called upon one of the company for a song. The song was sung, and the singer had the privilege of calling upon some one else for a song, speech, or sentiment ; and the man who sang the next song called upon some one else. In this fashion, every one round the table in turn contributed in some way to the entertainment ; those who could not sing either made a speech or told a story. During that evening I heard more Scotch songs than I had ever heard before ; and in particular I heard one, named "Rabin Tamson's Smiddy Oh !" which I had never heard before, and which I have never heard since.

In business the Scotch were much in evidence in the banks, nearly all the managers being Scotchmen ; and as merchants they were also much to the fore, the biggest house of all, Jardines, the "muckle house," as it was called, being a Scotch firm. Besides this, nearly all the coast steamers

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

were manned by Scotch, and a good proportion also of the ocean-going ships. In athletics, and all forms of sport, they well held their own.

The English were, next to the Scotch, the most numerous of any nationality. They made no great impression on me, because I had just come from London, and to all intents I was English myself. I found them, as I always do find them, pleasant and well-mannered, tolerant and easy-going, and with an unsurpassed reputation for fair dealing. In the business world they were prominent in the tea and silk departments, with a large contingent from Manchester in the piece-goods trade. In sport, and particularly in racing, they were well to the fore. The other nationalities from the British Isles, the Irish and the Welsh, were comparatively scarce ; but two Irishmen occupied leading positions in China, though not resident in Shanghai.

Next in importance, in every way, were the Americans. They made more impression on me than even the Scotch ; and for much the same reason, namely, that I had practically never met Americans before coming to Shanghai ; those I had occasionally met in London being, like the Scotch, toned down. Here was the same assertiveness, even more pronounced, here was an accent, or a variety of accents, quite as strange as

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that of the Scotchmen ; and here also was the number. In addition to these matters there were the ideas. America is a good six thousand miles away ; but the presence of these 255 Americans in our midst seemed to bring America and American ideas to our very door.

The Americans exercised far more influence on the community than their numbers warranted. I do not think that this was due to any special merit or force of character, of the Americans, though I do not deny their merit ; but in a picked community, as Shanghai then was, the standard of merit was high. The China trade was then considered such a *plum*, that only picked men came out ; and the standard of merit was quite as high, perhaps higher, in the British community than in the American. But I think that the Model Settlement itself had much more the atmosphere of an American city than of an English one. It was young : and every one residing there felt the influence of that fact. The "busy hum of men" never allowed any one to forget that it was a rapidly growing centre of commerce—progress was in the air. The sanguine spirits predicted with certainty that Shanghai would, some day, be the leading port in the whole East : and the backward ones could find no argument, considering the geographical position of

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the place and the vast possibilities of the Chinese Empire, to successfully combat that view. And these opinions were not ended with mere talk, for there was no scheme advanced, however daring, which did not find supporters. The China trade itself called for a large amount of speculation. The conditions were such that no house could do an absolutely safe business. If any house tried it, it found that their more courageous rivals took the business out of its hand, and it was ruined by current expenses. And if this was so in the realms of ordinary business, it goes without saying that in the irresponsible departments, by which I mean those departments which were not dependent upon London or other European support for their finances, the ideas were more untrammelled, and the schemes farther reaching. I fancy that at this period there were men who would willingly have undertaken the administration of the province of Kiang-soo, or for that matter of the Chinese Empire.

It seems to me that at this time the foreign trade of China was something like the game of Poker. If you tried caution you were ruined by your Antes and Straddles, or by some bolder player if you took up what you thought was a safe hand. If, instead of caution, you played the bold game, you stood the chance of being ruined

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outright. But, on the whole, it seemed to me that the bold players fared best, provided, of course, that they had a fair supply of brains.

This state of affairs entirely suited the American genius : and the American ideas entirely suited the place. The old-fashioned, steady-going notions of London were out of place in a community which overflowed with energy, and no Englishman who came out retained the London notions for long. But the Americans, naturally, with their Republican ideas, took the lead ; and the English followed it so willingly, as far as the Republic of Shanghai was concerned, that they became more thorough-going Republicans than the Americans themselves.

The Americans came chiefly from Boston and New York ; and it was the New York accent which was the prevailing one. The striking feature of this accent was the inability to pronounce the letter R. Thus, the word "first" was pronounced "fyst ;" the word "absurd," "abside ;" and the word "girl" "goil." And this would be done by a New Yorker, sitting at table alongside a Scotchman, who rolled his R's after the Scotch manner, and said "Furrst" and "Absurrd," and "Gurrl," while there might also be present a Londoner with his quaint but not unmusical accent.

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In the world of commerce they occupied a prominent position. There were six or seven large American hong, of which the biggest, namely the old firm of Russell & Co., challenged comparison with the "muckle house." On the Yang-tze they had a large fleet of river steamers, built on the American plan, and running to Hankow. They were all commanded by Yankee skippers, and engineered by Yankees. The only line running across the Pacific to San Francisco was an American one—the Pacific Mail.

There were also two or three American dentists, who were absolutely up to date. And they had more than their fair share of missionaries.

Next, both in point of numbers and importance, came the Germans. I am not able to say much about them, because they did not mix very freely with the English or Americans. They had a club of their own, and, as a rule, did not belong to the Shanghai Club. But the utmost good feeling prevailed, and those Germans whom we did meet were most agreeable. They were musically inclined, as may be supposed, and several Germans were leading members of the Philharmonic Society.

Within their club was a small theatre, where they gave performances now and again, to which all Shanghai society was invited, and the performances were excellent. In the world of sport

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they were not very prominent, except in racing ; here, however, there were two or three first-class German stables and jockeys.

As regards trade, the Germans had two or three big firms, and a large quantity of small ones.

The French were not very numerous. They had a concession of their own, governed by a Consul and a separate Municipal Council, and which was jealously kept apart from the rest of settlement. It was, and still is, an anomaly.

The other European nations, the Swiss, Spaniards, Italians, and *pukka* Portuguese, were represented by a few individuals only.

I must not omit the Jews and Parsees. These came almost entirely from India, or parts adjacent, and they were all British subjects. There were two large Jewish houses, the two Sassoons, and the remainder of the Jews, and all the Parsees, were either brokers or merchants in a very small way. They were quite inoffensive, and their *raison d'être* was chiefly the opium trade.

The Portuguese, as distinguished from the *pukka* Portuguese, were a curious race. They were Eurasians, from Macao—half-caste Chinese and Portuguese. They were the most extraordinary beings I had ever seen. They were dwarfish and, some of them, downright ugly. They were employed in various merchants' hong,

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in the banks and shipping firms, to do copying work. They were not fit for much more than that, and they rarely rose to any position. I believe that they were reliable as far as their capacity went, and they were sober and industrious. The pay they received was small, which was the reason they got employment. The only ones I ever came to be acquainted with were the best of them, and they were competent and able ; but all the same there was lacking a "something," which I fancy would prevent them attaining the high posts of commerce. They were nicknamed "Goosers." \*

\* From a distortion of the word Portuguese. Thus, Portugoese : hence Goose, and Gooser.





**COMMERCIAL**



## CHAPTER V

### COMMERCIAL

"Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike an abomination to the Lord."—*The Proverbs of Solomon.*

"It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer ; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth."—*Idem.*

I FOUND the paths of commerce much more pleasant to travel along in Shanghai than in London. This was not because the work was easier, for it was not ; on the contrary it was much harder. But the work was more congenial, and there was less red tape. In London the office hours were from half-past nine in the morning to five, or later, in the afternoon, with an hour for lunch ; but, whether there was any work to do or not, you had to remain at your desk. Here, the office hours were much the same, but more elastic. If you had work to do, you started earlier and stayed later, but if things were slack you could go out and do a promenade on the Bund, and close the office at, say, four o'clock.

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The paths of commerce, all the same, pleasant as they seemed, and with rich plums on trees at the side within reach, were in reality full of snares and pitfalls. The plums were, in many cases, not plums at all, but delusions, and when you tried to pluck one, you fell into a pit which you had overlooked and bruised yourself badly.

All the big honges were divided into departments. There were tea, silk, and Manchester goods, besides shipping and insurance, with a head to each department. There were, however, some of the large firms who only did silk and shirtings, and some who only did tea and shirtings; and, again, there were some large firms who only did silk, and some who only did tea, and some who did nothing else except piece-goods. And there were some who, in addition to their ordinary business, added a land and house agency branch. Finally, there were a great number of small firms who dealt in what was then styled, vulgarly, muck and truck—such things as buffalo hides, buffalo horns, horsehair, China grass, and a host of the various products of the vast empire at our backs.

There were five or six banks, including one French, the Comptoir d'Escompte. Their main business was exchange, namely, buying and selling

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

bills and making advances upon securities and produce.

Besides those shipping companies which employed merchants to act as agents, there were the three mail lines, the Peninsular and Oriental, the French Messageries Impariales, and the Pacific Mail, which had separate establishments of their own, and certain insurance companies also had hongongs of their own.

The Imperial Maritime Customs were conducted by foreign heads of departments, with a numerous Chinese staff.

There were also sundry firms of lawyers, doctors, architects, and other professional men.

The consular body included nearly all the nations of the world, a large number, however, being represented by merchants. In the case of the English, the establishment was an imposing one, including a supreme court of justice, with a chief judge and a police magistrate.

Then there were the brokers. There were bill brokers, share brokers, coal, freight, and metal brokers, and brokers who did sundry businesses. They drove about all day long in little basket carriages, and they lived an active and a merry life, with little responsibility.

There were no telegrams in those days, none at least such as we now understand them. There

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was a line through Siberia, as far as Kiachta on the Mongolian frontier, and if a message were sent from London to Shanghai it would reach Kiachta in course of time. It would have to be forwarded thence by courier to Peking and Tientsin, and then come on by coast steamer. The southern line only came as far as Singapore; and from there the message would be sent on by mail steamer. So that a telegram took about three weeks in arriving at its destination; but this was a very considerable saving of time, as the mail letters at that time took nearly seven weeks from London.

The position of Shanghai as a trading centre is unique. It stands on the bank of the river Hwang-poo, which forms a very fine harbour, and is about thirteen miles from the river Yang-tsze. The latter is, taking all things into consideration, the greatest river in the world. It is not the longest, but it is very long, about 3500 miles; and it is navigable for ocean-going steamers as far as Hankow, six hundred miles from its mouth, and for river steamers as far as Ichang, which is about four hundred miles further upstream, and it drains a vast extent of a country which is, no doubt, the richest in the world.

Shanghai, situated close to its mouth, is the natural seaport for the whole of this region.

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Besides this, the silk districts of North China are close to its door, and the green tea districts not much farther away. It is also the natural distributing centre for all the trade in the north, Chefoo, Tientsin and Newchwang being dependent upon it. Nor is there much chance of its being ousted from this commanding position, all the other possible ports in the neighbourhood being handicapped in one way or another.

When you stand upon the Shanghai bund and look westward, you have the whole of the Old World before you, the largest extent of land on the globe. Between you and the most westerly point of Europe, a distance of over 7000 miles, there is nothing but land. If you turn to the east, you face the greatest ocean of the world, and you can go direct to San Francisco or to Vancouver, a distance of 6000 miles. If you execute the military movement known as "Right half turn," you face directly the mighty Pacific, and there is nothing except the ocean between you and the South Pole, at an immense distance.

These ideas, the vastness of the distances impress the imagination, and the name given by the Chinese to their country, Chung-kwo, the Middle Kingdom, does not seem so fatuous when we consider the geographical position which this great Empire occupies in the world.



## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

King Solomon, when he wrote the two verses in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Proverbs at the head of this chapter, may have been thinking of the Chinamen. He was a prophet, and possibly foresaw the chaos of weights and measures which exist in this country. The currency is a weight of silver, called a "tael." The tael is 1·333 ounces ; but there are two kinds of "tael" in Shanghai, namely the Shanghai tael, and the Hai-kwan or customs tael, the latter being worth a premium on the former. But this is not all ; every other trading centre in the country has a different tael ; there is a Chin-kiang tael, a Kiu-kiang tael, a Hankow tael, and a Tientsin tael. As for the copper cash, which is the currency of the peasantry and the people generally, the value of these compared with the tael varies from day to day, according to their supply on any market. In addition to this form of currency, there are Mexican and other dollars circulating, and a host of different subsidiary coins from all parts of the world, but mainly five, ten, and twenty cent pieces from Hong Kong.

King Solomon is quite right as to the buyer saying, "Naught, naught," but the Chinaman did not wait until they went away to begin boasting. They boasted in our offices, and their boasting usually took the form of giving us to understand

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

that we did not know our own business, and that they could buy the identical cloth they were after, at every hong in the place at a much lower price than we were asking.

“For ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain.”

The first great event in the world of commerce was the exodus of the Cha-sees from Shanghai to Kiu-kiang and Hankow, both places on the great river, for the purpose of buying the new season's tea. A large number of those who had come out with me had left on the same evening and the evening following; and the whole of them, quite a small army, had left in three days. I had heard incessant talk wherever I went about tea; and I was quite familiar with Oopacks, Oonams, Shuntams, and Ningchows. The market opened then later than it does now, or perhaps it was a late crop; at any rate, in that year the Cha-sees did not leave Shanghai until the 10th to 13th May. We heard in due course of their vast operations, which seemed at the time so wild; but which turned out to be so wise.

Our attention was now turned to the other great crop of North China, namely silk, as to the prospects of which there were many ominous rumours going about.



# THE NOBLE ARTICLE



## CHAPTER VI

### THE NOBLE ARTICLE

"Silk all same Sycee."—*Chinese saying.*

THE above title is almost universally used, perhaps in jest, to designate China raw silk. The name of the inventor of this famous nickname, famous I mean in North China, is lost in antiquity ; but it is so apposite, that when it was given to that little world of exiles in the land of Serica, it was at once adopted, and is still in current use.

The name is appropriate for many reasons. Beauty is always noble. All silk is beautiful, but that which is produced on the plains of Kiang-soo and Che-kiang, is by far the most beautiful in the world. The Chinese silkworm is, without doubt, the original silk-worm, the parent stock from which all others are derived ; and the climate, soil, water, and the other conditions which combined to make this particular worm so pre-eminent

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

in long distant ages, still exist to maintain that pre-eminence. This is not a matter of theory ; the product of the China worm to this day, in spite of the folly, neglect, and carelessness of the Chinese grower and reeler, and in spite of the disease consequent upon that neglect, is still quite unsurpassed. Any one who has seen a book of classical Tsatlee will bear me out. It is of the purest white colour, and has a lustre which is seen in no other silk ; it possesses a quality of such nervous strength that it seems almost alive in your hands. This quality is that which gives it its durability, and in combination with its other great merits gives it the high value which it always possesses. High value alone would not merit the title of noble ; but high value being the result of high merit certainly does do so.

The shipping clerks of the mail steamers considered silk particularly noble. When they saw it coming along the bund to their godowns, their eyes glistened and they shouted aloud for joy. For the overland freight was Tls.13 per bale, and the tael was worth 6s. 2d. ; there were six bales to the cubic ton, so that the freight on silk was £24 per ton ; the ordinary freight for goods being then £3 to £4 per ton.

Then there is the antiquity. This counts for much in all the countries of the world, but in none

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so much as in China. The ancient is venerable and the venerable is worthy of respect, hence noble. According to Chinese records, sericulture has existed from a very remote antiquity. It is recorded that the Empress Se-ling-she, wife of a famous Emperor Hwangte (2640 B.C.), encouraged the cultivation of the mulberry trees, the rearing of the worms, and the reeling of silk. How long before the period when this Empress flourished, it was that sericulture existed, it is impossible to say, but time counts for little in China, and it may very well have been five or ten thousand years.

The year 1870 was a notable one in the history of the modern silk trade. It marks a turning point in many ways. The silkworm disease, which had almost ruined the Italian and French crops for the previous sixteen years, was in the course of being extirpated, and the production from these important rearing districts was rapidly growing. This was having the effect of depressing prices ; but curiously enough, the very year in which the disease was being successfully stamped out in Europe, was that in which it seems to have suddenly developed largely in the other great producing country ; for in that year the China crop was very much the smallest known since the Port of Shanghai was opened. It seems as if the



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microbes, being chased out of Europe by the discoveries of science, had migrated to a country where science was quite in the background. The China crop being, at that time, the most important in the world, its failure much more than neutralized the increase in Europe ; and prices not only recovered their former level, but went very much beyond it.

There were two other things which came to pass this year, which vitally changed the conditions of the entire trade of the East. One of these was the opening of the Suez Canal, which shortened the distance between Europe and the East by just about one-half. The other was the fall in the Silver Exchange, which, though the fall was slight and therefore entirely overlooked at the time, marked the commencement of the various causes which led to the dramatic collapse in value of one of the precious metals, from 6*d.* an ounce in this year to just about 2*d.* in the beginning of the twentieth century. This great event, which we all see clearly enough now, was not appreciated by a single man at that time ; or if it was, the man who appreciated the importance of what was taking place kept his opinion carefully to himself.

The critical time in the rearing of the China\*

\* The production of the neighbourhood of Shanghai is called, *par excellence*, China silk. That from Canton is called Canton

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silkworm is the last half of the month of May. The worm is nearing maturity, and preparing to spin ; his appetite is enormous, and his state of health delicate ; and it is at this time that not only the disease, but also the weather, if unfavourable, causes great mortality. The news from the country on my arrival were bad as to the crop, and every day fast boats came in with worse and worse reports. There could be no mistake, because from all quarters came the same tale, and to confirm it prices of the old stock rose some 30 per cent. When the final estimates came in we were told that there was only half an average crop.

This meant a silk famine ; that is, the total production of the world would not be enough to *go round*. Under these circumstances it seemed to the entire trade that silk was a sound investment, almost regardless of cost. When the silk came to market, the price asked, and paid was about 33s. a pound for "Chop Threes."\*

To me, just come from London, where I had been used to a much lower scale of values, this seemed extravagant and mad. But a friend of mine in a moment of confidence told me that he had bought (taken an interest in, he called it),

silk ; that from Chefoo is called Shantung silk ; that from Szechuen, Szechuen silk, and so on.

\* Chop Threes meant standard Tsatlee, 3rd quality.

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thirty bales of silk. I asked him, griffin-like, why on earth he had paid such a price ; and his answer, "because he could not get it any cheaper," came so much like a slap in the face, that for a moment I did not understand what he meant ; and when he left me, I pondered for some little time upon his cocksureness.

The action of the Shanghai merchants, however, was approved of by the London market, and many thousands of bales were shipped in hot haste. Then, some time in August, the news of a great event came by telegram from Singapore and Kiachta, which spread consternation amongst these operators. This was the news of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and such was the nature of our telegraphic communication that in one short week, by steamer after steamer from south and north, we received the news, not only of the declaration of war, but of the first series of battles up to those of Wissembourg and Worth, with their results.

There was every reason for consternation and dismay. France was the principal consumer of raw silk ; and here was France, not only at war, but getting much the worst of it in a death struggle. There were many thousand bales of silk on the water and in London (at that time practically all the silk went to London), of which

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the cost was the highest ever known of recent years, and the prospect was appalling. As James T. Brand, one of the biggest of the silkmen, said to me, "This is not a question of a loss of 2s. a pound such as we have occasionally had to face, this is a question of 10s. a pound." And he made a wry face.

It was then that the Chinamen showed, as they generally do show, what splendid merchants they are. On receipt of the news of the war, they were not at all alarmed. They promptly called a meeting of the Silk Guild, and decided on their course of action in an hour or two; and next morning sent round to the foreign silk hong, and took away all the muster bales, thus signifying that they were not sellers of silk at all, for the present. Their action steadied the market all over the world, and averted what might have been a disastrous panic. Not a single bale of silk was sold for the next two months, and when business was resumed it was at prices very little lower than before the outbreak of the war.

During the next five years, the noble article received such a hammering and banging about that it seemed in a fair way of becoming an ignoble and inglorious one, as regards value. For various reasons, the price fell gradually away until, from being 33s. in 1870, it was not much over 16s. in

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the spring of 1876. The chief cause of this was that the French and Italian scientists, with M. Pasteur at their head, had tackled the disease so successfully, that the European crops had increased rapidly, so rapidly that they had overtaken the consumption; and as the China crop had got over its troubles of 1870, and as both Canton and Japan were steadily forging ahead, there was more silk produced than was wanted. But Nature, in two or three days neutralized the work which M. Pasteur had accomplished in ten years, and the noble article was once more about to show that it merited its title.

In the early part of June, 1876, there were several severe thunderstorms all over the South of Europe. As I mentioned previously, the worm, during the last stage of his wormhood, just before he is ready to spin, is very delicate and especially liable to sickness and death if the weather is bad, and especially if it is thunderous. During those few days, much more than half the silkworms of Italy and France were destroyed, and instead of a time of plenty which had lasted for five years there was about to be a famine. The failure of the China crop in 1870 was viewed by the Continental mill-owner with concern, but with calmness. China is a long way off, and the news of the catastrophe came by degrees. And for various

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reasons a shortness of Asiatic silk has not the same effect as a failure of the European silk. The French are proverbially excitable, and the fact that the rearing is done almost at their doors brought home to them the nature of the disaster with telling force. It seemed to mean ruin, not only to the rearers, but also to the throwsters and weavers and to everybody connected with the industry. When, therefore, it was ascertained beyond doubt that so great damage was done, the excitement was intense, and prices rose by leaps and bounds.

In China, the telegraph was now laid up to Shanghai, but it was not working well, for the cable had a trick of breaking down now and again, when we were cut off from Europe until it was repaired. So that although we had heard some rumours of the failure, they were vague and unreliable. At last, about June 20, the news arrived, and the most remarkable state of affairs took place.

The Shanghai merchant, as a rule, conducted his operations on the best business lines. The head of a house was generally quite a young man—perhaps a little over thirty; but he was responsible to the London authorities, and was quite alive to the nature of his responsibilities. But being young he was well aware that there are, now

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and then, times when caution must be cast to the winds. Want of pluck was never a fault of the Shanghai tai-pans, and the great majority of them rose to the occasion. It was realized that this was not a time to buy silk on the orthodox lines, by which I mean a somewhat long course of bargaining; it was seen that it was necessary to become possessed of silk promptly, and the only way to accomplish that was to pay the Chinaman what he asked.

During the next few weeks an enormous business was done, and naturally prices rose. But the Chinaman is so good a merchant that prices were never raised so much as to stop the business, and at the end of the few weeks, considering the wild hunger existing for silk, it was astonishing how comparatively moderate had been the rise. The Chinese merchants, from long experience and from natural genius, know that when a strong demand sets in it is the time to sell, because a demand has a nasty trick of dying away. They knew that though the European crops were short, there was plenty of China silk, and that it had to be moved; and they did nothing to prevent the European buyer from taking it from them at a good value.

There was only one line of telegraph direct to Shanghai, namely, the southern one. This had

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been working very well during all this time, but about the end of July it broke down, and we were cut off from Europe. It happened that immediately after the break-down, a period of the wildest speculation began on the London silk market, of which we were, of course, ignorant. It was a little over a fortnight before the cable was repaired ; but one afternoon a single message was delivered to one of the small silk houses. The fortunate recipient could not believe his eyes, for it gave the London market active and advancing at a quotation four shillings a pound higher than the previous advices. The telegram was mutilated, as most of them were at that time, but the meaning was clear, and the quotation, incredible as it looked, was beyond any doubt. He had the market to himself, but he did not know that ; in fact, he could only suppose that many other houses had similar news. This consideration induced him to act promptly ; he entered the market, and in two hours came out again possessing two thousand bales of silk, worth rather more than £200,000.

No one else had any telegram, so that he had a monopoly ; but, as was unavoidable, he raised the market on himself by taking such a large quantity in so short a time. As for the other silk houses and the rest of the trade, they were plunged into an unparalleled ferment on hearing of



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this big operation. They guessed that news of a very important character had arrived, but, in the absence of definite advices from their home correspondents, they were powerless.

Next morning many hundreds of telegrams, which had been blocked for a fortnight, came rushing in, by twos and threes, to every house in the place ; sometimes three telegrams, bearing all of them different dates, would be delivered at the same time. They all told the same tale : "Buy silk." Some said, "Buy until stopped," or "Buy without limit," "Buy one thousand bales at best price," "Buy all you can at reasonable prices," etc., etc.

It seemed to us that the London market had gone mad—the London market, usually so backward and cautious. As for the Shanghai market, it *kept its head* under really trying circumstances. It was steadied in a great measure by the attitude of the Chinese merchants, who, as usual, refused to be led away by the prevailing excitement. Prices, of course, went steadily up, but the Chinamen sold all the time. They fed the market in their own artistic style, preferring to get hard sycee for their produce to holding on to what might be, some day, an unsaleable article.

It was in this year that the system of *firm offers* became prevalent. The Chinese silk hong would

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place in the hands of the foreign firm one hundred up to five hundred bales, for sale in, say, a fortnight, at a price named in the contract. The silk was then offered to London by wire ; the foreign hong ran no risk, because at the expiry of the fortnight the silk, if not sold, could be handed back to the Chinaman.

In a year like 1876 this system really amounted to a "cumshaw" \* on the part of the Chinese to the foreigner. For with prices rising day by day when the firm offer expired the market value of the silk was always very much higher than the price named in the contract, so that the parcel was always accepted.

The motive of the Chinese in thus giving refusals was that the profits they were making were so great that they wished above all things to secure them by selling ; and they thought, rightly, that this was the easiest way of doing so.

Exchange during all this period was fluctuating wildly, which added considerably to all the other elements of gambling. The following transaction, which happened to be organized by me, then in charge of the business, is a typical one.

I obtained the refusal, for a fortnight, of about a hundred and fifty bales of re-reeled Tsatlee for New York at a certain price. The rate of

\* "Cumshaw," in pidgin, means a gift.

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exchange was round about 6s. for the tael. The offer with all particulars was telegraphed to New York, and the cable almost immediately broke down. At the end of the fortnight there was no reply from New York ; the value of the silk had risen over 150 taels a picul, and exchange had fallen 10d. to 11d. per tael. The nett result of this was that there was a profit of about 40,000 taels (over £10,000) hanging on to the parcel.

I was placed in a position of extraordinary difficulty. I was "in charge," but I was not a partner in the house ; and whatever action I took was not at my risk, but at the risk of my absent employers. The operation so far showed a big profit, but I had no authority for acting further, and if I had let the silk go by telling the Chinamen, "No wantchee," my employers could not possibly have blamed me. The circumstances, however, were exceptional. It was almost certain that a telegram was blocked on its way from New York, accepting the silk, and, taking all things into consideration, I could not bring myself to pass it. I bought, and shipped the whole parcel to London, telegraphing particulars and my reasons for acting.

The silk had scarcely left the port, when the telegram arrived from New York accepting it all.

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The matter was very quickly arranged in London, whence it was shipped to New York.

\* \* \* \* \*

After all this gambling, for such it was to a large extent, a collapse was inevitable. Prices had been run up about a hundred per cent. since June, and about the middle of October the whole thing came suddenly to an end. During the six months following it was demonstrated by results which of the houses had been speculating, and which had been acting as merchants should. Some lost all they made, and some lost all that and a great deal more. One or two houses were ruined. But it is greatly to the credit of the trade that these were exceptions ; the great bulk had been wise, and were greatly enriched by the season's operations.

Personally, I was very glad when the collapse took place. The strain had been severe and continuous. Every morning I was wakened by my boy with a telegram in a red envelope, which he stuck under my nose on the pillow, with a demand to "puttee name." \* It was a continuous exercise of judgment and being obliged to take enormous risks, with the fear of being caught when the inevitable collapse came. However, the London house was quite aware of the danger, and all went well.

\* Sign the receipt.

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I had the somewhat doubtful honour of having paid the highest price ever known for a run of Tsatlee, namely,  $712\frac{1}{2}$  taels per picul for the chop known as May-foong Elephant and Pot. This was for a Lyons constituent. I heard nothing about it, but I fear that the result could not have been pleasant for those interested; nor could it have been much consolation to them to be told, as I did tell them, and rightly, that it was a really superb parcel of silk in every way.

# **THE BLASTED VEGETABLE**



## CHAPTER VII

### THE BLASTED VEGETABLE

"Tu doces : thou Tea chest."—*Schoolmaster's quip.*

"There was a young man of Tai-ping,  
Who settled some Teas in a string,  
He bought an On-fa  
Which he sent to his Pa,  
Which made the old gentleman sing."

*Ascribed to H. T. WADE.*

THE above title was given to tea by an operator who had struck one of the very bad years, and was nearly ruined. It is certainly appropriate to one phase of its character, namely, the uncertainty of its market value. But it is not generally known by this name.

Nearly all the big houses were engaged in the trade. The first-crop teas were all bought in Hankow and Kiu-kiang, where most of the firms had hong's. Those houses which had no establishments on the Yang-tsze used to make arrangements with the houses established there, for the



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use of a tea godown and window. Their cha-see would go up the river at the proper time ; he would mess in the hong, and make his purchases in the establishment, paying his hosts a commission on what he bought, for the privilege.

The Tun-sin hong, of which I was now a member, had quite recently given up the tea trade, and the cha-see had left the firm. The large tea godown, with its window, was therefore empty and unused for a time. But a big tea hong, with establishments at Hankow and Kiu-kiang, but without one in Shanghai, made an arrangement with us to enable it to buy the second and third crops in Shanghai, in much the same way as the Shanghai houses bought the first crops in Hankow. I was therefore in a position, without being actually engaged in the trade, of being possessed of full information of what was going on.

The cha-see from this firm came down from Kiu-kiang in due course, and when he was installed in our tea godown, with a small army of tea boys, etc., he commenced operations. He was lodged in a bedroom adjoining mine, in an *annexe* quite separate from the hong. I found him a most agreeable companion, of a very social turn of mind. His great drawback, from my point of view, was, that he never wanted to go to bed. The nature of his business necessitated early rising,

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but that seemed to him to be quite consistent with late hours. The time of the year was the blazing, grilling, and sweltering Shanghai summer, when the shade thermometer is by day about  $95^{\circ}$  Fahr., and at night seldom below  $90^{\circ}$ . Our custom was, after dinner, to adjourn to the billiard-room and play for an hour or so, and perhaps take a stroll on the bund, retiring to our bedrooms soon after eleven. This cha-see, however, seemed never to get sleepy. He had had a long day's work, commencing at 6.30 a.m., and by the usual laws of nature he ought to have wanted to go to bed. Instead of this he would always come into my bedroom in his pyjamas quite bright and wide-awake, order up the boy for a "night-cap," light up a fresh cheroot, and begin to inform me about the inside mysteries of the tea trade. Escape was impossible. I could not lock him out, because there was no lock on the door; if there had been, it would not have availed, because the windows were open and he could come in by the verandah. A cha-see, when talking about the vegetable, is excessively voluble. He told me all about his business, and the profits they were making. The first-crop teas, which he had shipped from Kiu-kiang, were by this time being sold on the London market, and he used to tell me of the enormous profits they were making. He would go to his

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bedroom and return with strings of telegrams, containing sales of immense chops of tea, and the prices. I was usually stretched on my bed, not particularly interested in what I imperfectly understood, and wondering how long he was going to stay. Also, I must confess, the profits he said they were making seemed so large that I thought he must be drawing the long bow—a practice which cha-sees had the reputation of indulging in. The profits were 5*d.* to 7*d.* a pound, and even more. I usually fell asleep during his discourses, when he considerably turned out the gas and went to his own bedroom. I presume that he got some sleep, but considering the time at which he turned in, and the time at which he was “walking the board” \* on the following morning he cannot have had much.

I was doing him a great injustice by my unbelief. His midnight tales were all true. The firm of which he was a member had the practical monopoly of all the finest teas which came down to Kiu-kiang, so that in very bad times they, at the very worst, made no profit on their shipments, whilst in good times their profits were very large.

At this time the China tea crop was by far

\* A slang term for tasting tea, during which the cha-see has to pass backwards and forwards on a raised platform along the length of the table.

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the most important in the world. Here, as in silk, China tea meant the product of North China, namely that which came from the northern slopes of the mountains to Shanghai and the Yang-tsze ports, and from the southern slopes to Foo-chow and Amoy. As was the case with silk, the tea from Canton was known as Canton tea, and that from Formosa as Formosa tea. As for India, it was only beginning and was quite a negligible quantity ; and Ceylon was still growing coffee.

In the Yang-tsze ports the first crop teas were either contracted for or bought when they came to market in *strings*. A string meant a certain number of *chops*, say from six to fifteen or twenty, purchased at the same time and usually through the same Chinese tea-man. A chop of tea varied from 600 to 1200 *chests*, say an average of 900 chests ; and the value, at this time, of an average chop was £10,000 sterling. The purchase of a string of say, ten chops of this fine and high-costing tea was therefore quite a gentlemanly operation.

Previous to the opening of the Suez Canal, the bulk of the tea was shipped round the Cape in the famous Aberdeen clippers : the *Fiery Cross*, *Serica*, *Ariel*, *Taiping*, *Taitsing*, and many others. They were full-rigged ships, built especially for

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speed, and when under full sail were a beautiful sight to behold. The object being to place the new season's teas on the London market as early as possible, the majority of the crack clippers loaded at Foo-chow, which is a thousand miles nearer London than is Hankow. But those which loaded at Hankow were, to all appearance, quite as fine as the best of them. Shortly after my arrival at Shanghai, I went to Woo-sung with a party of friends in a house-boat, and it was our great good fortune to see two of these beautiful ships passing down the Yang-tsze under full sail. It was very fine weather, with a clear atmosphere and bright sun, such as often occurs in those latitudes ; the Yang-tsze outside Woo-sung is like the open sea except as regards colour, and the spectacle of those splendid clippers starting on their long journey was a memorable one. Their hulls were modelled on most graceful lines with all the art of the best shipwrights in the United Kingdom, and coupled with the enormous spread of canvas, produced a picture which struck us landsmen as magnificent. We were informed that these two ships, which left the Yang-tsze at the same time, parted company, and never saw one another until, ninety days later, they passed Gravesend on the same day, and almost at the same hour.

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The opening of the Suez Canal of course meant that these vessels were destined to be superseded. A comparatively slow steamer could convey the tea from Hankow to London in about two months, whereas these ships could not do so under three. They were kept at work for some years more, but gradually, one after another, they were withdrawn, until practically all the teas were sent in steamers through the canal.

The life of a cha-see during those few weeks when the tea crop had to be moved, was really a very strenuous one. The work was very hard, and it was also continuous, giving no rest. However, at the end of about six weeks the high pressure was over, and at the end of nine weeks it was finished. During the remainder of the year it was quite easy work.

The following sketch extracted from the *Foo-chow Daily Echo* of the period, is a fairly accurate account, though highly coloured, as befits a piece of writing in the comic style, of the life of a cha-see in the tea season.

### HOW WE LIVE IN FOO-CHOW.

*Extract from the Diary of a Cha-see.*

5 a.m.—Boy wakes me up, dreadful headache, sipped a cup of our extra choicest curio Souchong, which is

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certain to lose at least 25 per cent. on the London market, but I feel better.

5.30 a.m.—At the treadmill, found tai-pan had been walking the board since 5 a.m.

6 a.m. to 7 a.m.—I am of opinion that no one in the port has settled anything that compares in leaf, cup, weight, quality, and general “looksee” with our “fixings.”

8 a.m.—Having given vent to the foregoing opinion a B. and S. is suggested.

9 a.m.—Conference with tai-pan *re* Eastern question.

10 a.m.—Small spec. on my own account. Rejoicing at the 30s. rate, stood on my head and sang, “We mean to do without ’em”—meaning, of course, German boats.

11 a.m.—A slight reflection.

11.30 a.m.—“Friends” call, and give the latest news on all topics, left several secrets as well as the——

12 noon.—Exchange firm.

1 p.m.—Tiffin. Looked at a curried prawn and discussed a bottle of “local importation.”

2 p.m.—Hard labour again, trusting for a remission, however.

3 p.m.—Sat down for the first time this day—with sundry exceptions.

4 p.m.—“Boy! what for no pay my that Seltzer more chop chop no wantchee whiskey—never drink it”—well, hardly ever.

5 p.m.—Another (seltzer) (friend called).

5.30 p.m.—Thinking. (I take the advice my aged parent gave me before I left the land o’ cakes and honey—bawbees included—“My son,” says he, “think.” That is what I tried to do last season before I bought that wretched Congou on my own account.)

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6 p.m.—Have thought and have written list of Settlements for mail as well as several twelve-page epistles for our Colonial constituents, in which I devoted one page to tell them that the Chamber of Commerce had wired to the Minister at Peking respecting the re-opening of the Min, and had as yet received no reply—I don't think they are likely to.

7 p.m.—Went to club. Began with a small "boy," played billiards with some of our local Roberts'. Ballot on to-night, I put my name in the book and a pip in the box, but which side I don't remember, maskee.

8 p.m.—Dinner *à la carte*.

9.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.—A quiet rubber with a debit balance.

10.30 p.m. to midnight.—Ditto. Account squares.

12.30 a.m. to 2 a.m.—"Poker" (general depression). I must consult my medical adviser on the morn.

5.30 a.m.—A few more years, etc., etc., etc.

### *Another leaf from diary of Cha-see.*

The same old game up to 10 a.m.

10 a.m.—Found the Souchong I was bidding for all day yesterday was settled a week ago.

10.30 a.m.—A reverse. Informed that only part of yesterday's purchases can go forward at 30s. They won't bear 60s. freight. Never mind, *I don't think tea-men will accept the weights.*

11 a.m.—Tai-pan inquires if shipments by the outside steamer or sailing vessels cancel the 5 per cent. return. Replies from agents—2 ayes, 2 noes, and 1 equivocal.



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Tai-pan says I had better ship tea by the outside to save any trouble.

11.30 a.m.—Trouble about weights as I thought. Query what to do? Teas won't bear 60s. freight and tea-men threaten to stop musters unless we increase the weight 2 lbs. Tai-pan irritable.

Noon.—Tai-pan furious (war risk advertised).

1 p.m. to 2 p.m.—Tiffin. Tai-pan quieter.

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.—Mail. Advise Australia she will receive 4,500 tons by one steamer. (Note next day), "Steamer does not take it all."

6 p.m.—Bookman busy over corrected invoices and drafts.

7 p.m.—Club, meeting about something, as usual did not think the question overheard a joke, laughed and voted with the maker.

8 p.m.—Dinner. Object of meeting explained, find I voted for just the opposite to what I want. After dinner much as usual.

# **MANLY SPORTS**



## CHAPTER VIII

### MANLY SPORTS

"Play the Game."—*Current Phrase.*

COMMERCE was the beginning, the middle, and the end of our life in China ; that is to say, that if there were no trade, not a single man, except missionaries, would have come there at all. But being summoned to this remote part of the world by the earnest desire to make our fortunes, relaxation, in the shape of all kinds of sporting games, played by far the largest part, next to business, in our life.

Griffins, like myself, had at this time a ravenous hunger for exercise. If, from any cause, such as bad weather or press of business, or what not, we were prevented from taking our usual strenuous exercise, whatever it might be, rowing, rackets, fives, cricket, or riding, we were quite miserable. We felt as if we must get very ill, if we did not get our exercise. And it must be

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violent—we used to actually despise those men who took their only exercise in the shape of a mild walk of three or four miles, followed by a game of American bowls. We thought them milksops or duffers ; our notion was that bowls and walking were not exercise at all. We used to go to the bowling-alley and play, but only on wet days when real exercise was impossible ; and if we walked it was at four to five miles an hour. What we wanted and what we got was exercise of the most violent kind, fives, rackets, rowing, or riding ; something, to use the current phrase, to “shake up your liver.”

The reasons for this extraordinary desire for exercise were, first, the natural and healthy love of young men for activity. Second, there was a widespread idea that the climate was so unhealthy, that if you lived anything like a sedentary life, you would be carried off to Kingdom Come, very suddenly, by one of the various diseases which operate so quickly in those parts. I think that, although the whole thing was carried to excess, the idea was sound, for the very fact of our earnest love of games kept us abstemious. The youngsters were very temperate, with few exceptions, so that the good effect of our love of manly games reacted on our habits of life and kept us all healthy. For it was clear to all of us from experience that

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any excess, such as a regatta dinner or a cricket supper, left its effects, and prevented us from playing any game in our best form for two or three days afterwards.

The prevalent notion was that violent exercise was the cure for all ailments. "Do not go to the doctor," they would say, "but shake up your liver." During my first summer in China I was occasionally, notwithstanding all the fives, rowing, etc., out of sorts. I confided my troubles to a Scottish friend, who at once, with great contempt, recommended me to go to the Horse Bazaar and get a *powny*, and that would knock it out of me. Another friend recommended a walk round Sic-a-wey (about eleven miles) at full split, and *that* would knock it out of me. A third friend, with characteristic Shanghai freedom or brutal frankness, told me that I did look rather yellow, and that, of course, I had not been taking enough exercise. In all probability my trouble was that I had been doing too much, and wanted a rest.

This saying, "Shaking up the liver," used to call up a mental picture, as if the organ in question were like a bottle inside you, which had to be shaken up now and again to prevent the sediment going to the bottom.

The following incident illustrates the

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impatience with which youngsters regarded the absence of energy on the part of their elders. One afternoon, the tai-pan of a neighbouring hong came round to call upon our tai-pan. The man in question was perhaps thirty-five; he was a racing man, that is, he was what was styled a "noble owner." He did not ride himself, but owned a stable, and, now and then, won races. He suggested a walk to our tai-pan; and on being asked where he was going, he replied that he proposed to "hang about the Horse Bazaar," which meant a walk of one mile, until it was time to walk back and go to the club. After they had gone, my fellow-clerk gave vent to his feelings of contempt. How, he asked, can any man go on like that; never taking any exercise except hanging round stables; and he further expressed an opinion that the man would be dead in two years. A violent opinion, doubtless, and I only give it to show how strongly we all held that exercise was a vital necessity.

Our Chinese friends, who take no sort of exercise, looked upon us with a kind of amused tolerance. We were different from them; we ate strong flesh of cows and sheep, which they avoid; and they looked upon our violent games as perhaps necessary to work off the effects of beef and mutton. "Belong foreign man custom," they

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would say, as they turned to their diet of rice and fish and cabbage.

Shanghai was an absolutely ideal place of residence for a young man who loved sport, because he could get plenty of it, easily and cheaply. In London, after business hours, we got rowing and cricket in the summer, and football in the winter ; but so much time was wasted in travelling from the city to the place where the sport was to be had, that we got very little of it. What a contrast it was in Shanghai ! Every kind of sport was available, and almost at our doors. We could rise early and go for a ride across country before breakfast, or we could take out the gun and kill a brace of pheasants.\* There was every kind of amusement to be had—cricket, racquets, fives, rowing, and bowling ; and all of them at comparatively small expense, with the single exception of racquets. This game, which is the most absorbing of them all, was beyond the reach of us Griffins, and it was not undertaken until we had, in the course of time, ourselves become tai-pans.

Cricket was the game towards which we mostly gravitated. It was cheap, for one thing ; and it is, during the extreme summer heat, more suitable than the violent games of the autumn and winter. None of my friends were at all proficient in the game ;

\* This cannot be done now.



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we were, in fact, in the class known as duffers. But that did not matter, because we were Griffins. There was an easy tolerance in all these things ; the big swells of the first eleven did not disdain to play at the same wicket with us during evening practice, for they well knew that there might be the making of cricketers in some of us, and were willing to discover latent capacity.

The committee of the club, in arranging the matches for the season, always included one, and sometimes a second match for those members who were neither in the first nor second eleven. These matches were called Feebles *v.* Duffers ; and they were as interesting in their way as the better class games. On one of these occasions, the captains of the elevens, either from a spirit of frolic, or because they were dissatisfied with the time-honoured name, advertised the match as the "Haute École *v.* the Upper Ten." This had the effect of attracting an unusual number of spectators, who, however, must have been at first disappointed, as the play was below the average of even a Feeble and Duffer match. The bowling and fielding on both sides were bad, so much so that the few passable bats made immense scores before they were put out. On the side which was fielding every man, one after the other, was put on to bowl, in desperation. The batsmen grew

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bolder, despising the bowling, and hit out freely at everything. This, however, generally sealed their fate, and their carelessness enabled even the feeblest bowler to get them out at last. As for the really bad bats, they went down like nine-pins. One of the players wrote an account of this famous match for one of the newspapers, in which he described his own performance at the wicket : "I took my place," he wrote, "in a Marylebone attitude, prepared to play in Marylebone style, when I felt a sharp stinging sensation on my left thigh. The umpire gently nodded, and I returned to the pavilion amid derisive cheers."

This match gave more amusement to the spectators than any of the big matches of the season. Perhaps the human mind delights in violent contrasts, for they seemed to be equally pleased with the bat who returned to the pavilion with a score of eighty, as with him who came back with a duck's egg. Perhaps they were simply pleased with the free hitting, or thought that although it was not cricket, it was magnificent ; but whatever the reason was, this match excited an unusual amount of interest.

There has been, of recent years, a good deal of correspondence in the English newspapers, on the subject of the decadence of our race ; and many writers attribute it (if it really exists) to the

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excessive indulgence in sport of all kinds, amongst our people. As far as regards the spectators, whether at a football match, a cricket match, or a race meeting, there may be some truth in what they say ; and if it ever comes to be that the people are content to do nothing themselves except watch a match of any sort being played by professionals, it would certainly be a bad sign. But as for any young man being too fond of manly sports, and suffering from undue indulgence in them ; that surely is impossible. If he is a man of means, sports give him employment ; if he has to earn his living, he must devote his time to doing that in the first place, which leaves only his leisure for sport. Of course there are the exceptions to the general rule ; it may occur that a youngster neglects his business in order to play, but that works its own cure, because his pocket suffers. In my opinion it is impossible for a young man to have too much of the manly sports. They do him good in every way, they exercise his body, making it supple and strong ; they cause the wrist and other members to obey the eye instinctively ; and they exercise the mental powers in a high degree. A young man who has taken his full of manly sports in his youth is a better man all round for the rest of his life.

Besides this, there is the social aspect of the

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question. It greatly strengthens the bonds of friendship amongst men. By meeting your fellow-man in this way, you often discover merits in him of which you had been ignorant. Sport is said to be a great leveller, and so it is ; but it levels up, not down. For the spirit of competition, which means doing your best, and especially of fair play, which is the essence of real sport, expands the views of those who are narrow-minded, and broadens still further the ideas of those already broad-minded. Fair play means give and take, not, as in some walks of life, take all you can get ; and the practice of the fine principles of sport insensibly influences every sportsman's actions in all departments of life, and does very much to make him what we call a gentleman. So much is this recognized that the idea has passed into a current phrase, "Play the Game."

Referring to my previous remark as to the danger of allowing amusements to interfere unduly with business, there were two forms of recreation which were usually debarred in the agreement between the employer and the employee. These were horse-racing, or riding as a jockey, and amateur theatricals. It was found by the tai-pans, from experience, that these forms of amusement became, at times, so engrossing that the youngster engaged in either one of them was

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not fit to do his work. In the case of racing, during the training and especially just before the races, the ponies occupied so much attention, and required so much care, as to engross all the thoughts of the young man, so that he could not fix his attention on anything else. With regard to amateur theatricals, it was much the same thing. If a youngster were to be cast for anything like a prominent part, his whole thoughts were in the play during the last portion of the rehearsal period, and especially during the few days preceding the performance. The tai-pans rightly thought that the business was the first consideration, hence the clause in the agreement, which usually ran thus : "All horse and pony-racing, or riding in races, and all acting in public theatricals is forbidden, without the consent of the resident partner."

Another favourite form of exercise was rowing. This was done about twice a week all through the summer, when eights and fours were arranged beforehand. Towards the end of September, active training was begun, and the course of selection of crews for the autumn regatta commenced. No one who has not rowed in an eight can understand the fascination of this sport ; to the outsider it appears a dull and laborious pursuit, steadily tugging at an oar, and carefully

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watching the back of the man before you. But there is scarcely a keener pleasure in life than the first half-mile in an eight. You use all your strength and skill without any effort ; the boat seems alive under you, propelled by the united force of eight pairs of arms and legs, and eight powerful backs.

It is true that after, say, three-quarters of a mile, the boat begins to drag, if the crew is not in condition, but that soon rights itself.

For the autumn regatta there was usually an international eight-oared race, English *v.* Scotch, English *v.* American, and, in recent years, English *v.* German. The crews selected for this event were always composed of the best men in the club. For those who were not quite good enough for such distinguished company, there was a race provided, called the Club Eights, which was almost as interesting as the big race. It was my fortune to have to row in the latter, and when the crew went out together for the first time, I discovered that some of my companions were certainly more conspicuous for brute strength than for skill at the oar. In the middle of the boat was a powerful Highlander at No. 5, and behind him was a brawny German at No. 4, whilst No. 6 thwart was occupied by an equally gigantic Englishman. Of course the boat did not go well, the

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various faults committed by the crew combined to make it rock and splash in such a manner as to break the heart of our coach, and when we returned to the boathouse, both he and our stroke had exceedingly long faces. Nor did the next three or four days perceptibly improve our style, so that at length the coach himself suggested the advisability of getting, if possible, a more experienced coach than himself, to take us out for a few days. Our stroke prevailed upon an American, who was a very good oar, to give us his assistance, and our crew went out on the following evening, quite prepared to receive more abuse, if possible, than it had had nightly from our own coach.

After a gentle paddle, during which our bad rowing was not so glaringly apparent, we had an easy; and the American coach stood up in the boat holding the rudder-lines in his hands. He explained to us that he wanted us to practise starts; that, when he gave the word, we were to pull a short but *ruther* deep stroke, recover quickly, and settle down at once into a long racing stroke. He further explained that the short and deep stroke put instant way on the boat, and had been executed with great success at various regattas he knew of.

The order to pull a deep stroke was a rather

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risky one, considering that the chief fault of Nos. 4, 5, and 6 was that of rowing too deep. However, the coach, still standing, said, "Get forward ; are you ready ?" and "Go !"

The scene which followed is almost indescribable. Nos. 4, 5, and 6 seemed bent on getting the blades of their oars to touch the bed of the river ; they recovered as quickly as possible, and made another desperate stroke. The boat rolled wildly, and was nearly upset ; all the bow-side rowlocks went under water with a *swish*, and the cox nearly fell into the water. He tumbled back into his seat, and said, "Jesus Christ," and then, which appeared unnecessary, "Easy all." He had a most serious face ; he tried no more starts, but, after a consultation with the stroke, took us for a very long and tiresome paddle, with hardly an easy. He never let us alone for a moment, but slanged us all unceasingly ; and he had at his command a quite unique collection of American profanity of which we had full benefit.

We never got into anything like form, and our antagonists jeered at us openly. The betting was 2 or 3 to 1 against us. On the eve of the regatta I walked into town with the stroke of the rival eight. "You have never been beaten in a boat-race ?" he asked me. I replied that it was



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so. "You will be to-morrow, you can bet on that," he said.

But we won the race. It must be owned that it was by simple brute force ; and that if we had had to row even twenty yards further than the mile, we should surely have been beaten.

# SHOOTING



## CHAPTER IX

### SHOOTING

“The Sportsman is a man of calm demeanour.”—*Asen.*

**S**HANGHAI was a splendid place of residence for a young man who loved sport ; and in no department is this saying so justified as in that of shooting game. For, not only was the game extraordinarily abundant, but it was close at hand, and easy to reach by means of the network of creeks all over the country. It was also of great variety, and the shooting season lasted longer than it does in most countries. The shooter needed to lay aside his gun only for three or four months—from about the middle of May, when the spring snipe departed for the north, until the end of August, when the same birds returned, under the name of autumn snipe, on their way south. And, by a happy dispensation, these were the very months when shooting would be impossible owing to the heat.

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This is the *Shanghai Sportsman's Calendar*—  
*About August 25.*—The autumn snipe arrive,  
remaining from three to four weeks.

*October 1.*—Pheasant shooting ; also deer, partridge, hare, woodcock, quail, and winter snipe.

*December 1.*—Wild duck of various kinds, wild geese and wild swans, bustard, etc., etc.

*China New Year* (a movable feast, but occurring late in January or any time in February).

—Pheasant, etc., shooting ends.

*February–March.*—Winter snipe shooting.

*Middle of April.*—Spring snipe arrive, and stay from three to four weeks.

No event in the world of sport made such a deep and lasting impression upon me as the advent of the spring and autumn snipe. One evening, towards the end of August, when the summer was still in full swing, and we were still in the airiest costume, my tai-pan called me out, after dinner, from the drawing-room to the verandah, to listen to the sounds overhead. There seemed to be thousands of birds whistling above us. These, he said, were snipe, and that it was a sign that summer was over. He was right, and yet he was wrong. The sounds we heard were not made by snipe, but by other birds flying with them ; they were all attracted by the lights of

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Shanghai, and passing over in an immense army Nor was the summer over by some four weeks.

We all knew about the migration of birds ; we knew about the swallow and the nightingale and the woodcock. But whereas, in England, these facts of natural history are on a comparatively small scale, and are unnoticed for that reason, and also because of their familiarity ; here, the migration of the snipe is not only on a scale of tremendous magnitude, but is presented to the view of residents in such a way that it cannot be overlooked.

For example, the arrival of the woodcock in England is unknown, except by hearsay, and to the sportsman who goes to look for him in the coverts. But in China the snipe burst forth on your view like a visitation, or shall I say like an agreeable plague of Egypt ? For you might make your promenade along the footpaths, say on August 20, and you would see no bird which you had not seen all through the summer. But if you took the same walk a week later, you would find the whole country alive with large and fat snipe, which fluttered away from you in a lazy fashion.

The snipe did not actually come into the settlement for obvious reasons, but they swarmed all over the interior of the race-course, just outside

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the cricket-ground ; and at the end of August there was always a ceaseless fusillade every evening, from five to seven or later. The cricketers did not relish this period, as they ran the risk of being peppered by the ardent snipe shooter.

The number of these snipe that pass over China can only be guessed at ; but as they pass over the whole country, a distance from west to east of something like fifteen hundred miles, it must be immense.

They linger on the fertile plains of China for a considerable time ; and during that period they become very fat. This is not surprising, as they find a feeding-ground probably not to be beaten, and they spend all their time in eating. I once killed an autumn snipe, just behind the present Country Club, which had three large earth worms dangling out of his mouth, half swallowed. This is not a traveller's tale.

These snipe are the pin-tail (*Gallinago stenura*) and the great spring or Swinhoe (*Gallinago megala*), though no doubt other varieties are to be found in the great migratory army. These two kinds are easily distinguishable by the tail feathers, as well as by other signs. The average weight of the great or Swinhoe snipe is seven ounces, but after fattening for a few days on the fields, he often turns the scale at eight ounces. The weight

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of the Pin-tail is four and a half to five ounces (H. T. Wade, "Boat and Gun"). About September 15 they all leave for the South. They both breed in Siberia and Central Asia, and spend the winter in India and Ceylon, and in the Malay Peninsula; the great spring snipe, however, has a more easterly flight, and is not found in India, but only in the Malay Peninsula (F. W. Styan).

Next comes the pheasant shooting, which begins by common consent on October 1, as in Great Britain. There is no legal close time for game in China: the utmost which can be done in that direction is the prevention of the sale of game in the markets, which is done by the municipal council. But there is nothing to prevent the Chinese sport from shooting or snaring game all the year round: and there is no doubt that this is done, the Chinese being always ready to earn dollars. The fault rests with those who buy the pheasants, etc., out of season, and I regret to say that some steamer captains and stewards have been guilty in this respect, because I have seen pheasants served at table on a passenger steamer in the month of June.

None of us ever thought of killing a pheasant before October 1; that was the law of the old country, and that was our law, which we could not break without loss of self-respect. But when



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the boy, in the month of September, or perhaps even in August, served up a brace of young pheasants (which had not been bought in the market, and which, to save appearances were styled "Shantung chicken"), I never saw any one, not even the most conservative sportsman refuse to partake. The temptation was great, because a young Chinese pheasant in September has a delicate flavour, very attractive to people who have been through the Shanghai summer, when, owing to the extreme heat, the meals have a monotonous character ; and when, in contrast to the other nine months of the year, one is quite pleased if a good curry is served. Besides, when the conservative old sport, who is a stickler for the close time, sees the young pheasant actually served, it is a *fait accompli*. The young bird has been killed, and he thinks that, under the circumstances, it would be quixotic to refuse to eat it on conscientious grounds.

I could never see very much harm in the September pheasant, considering that the birds are all wild and in such great numbers. In Great Britain it is different, because the pheasant is not indigenous, and the close time is necessary for his protection. And in Great Britain the law is enforced. In Shanghai it is exactly the reverse : the pheasant is indigenous, and the law as to close

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time cannot be enforced ; and the bird is fit for the table in September. At the end of the season it is a different matter. The pheasant in January is old, and not so fit for the table as early in the season, and they are approaching the breeding season. So that our efforts ought to be chiefly directed to curtail as much as possible the shooting and sale of pheasants at the end of the season.

The Chinese or ringed pheasant (*Phasianus torquatus*) is a very fine bird. His distinguishing mark is the white neck-ring, but he is also distinguished by his size, strength, and pluck. It is possible that he is the parent stock of all pheasants ; it seems even probable, but nothing can be known about that. Of all the wild game in the Shanghai country, he is by far the most plentiful, and it may safely be said, that if a sportsman bags in a day's shooting twenty head of game, his bag will include at least sixteen pheasants.

When we youngsters started shooting, the great majority of us had no experience. The guns we used were generally pin-fire breech-loaders, which, compared to the weapons of a very few years later, were most inconvenient. We had no dogs, and we soon learned in our expeditions that, in the absence of a retriever, it was of the first importance to *kill* our birds, because a *runner* was almost always lost. This led us into the habit of

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snap-shooting, and of firing at pheasants at very short range, say twelve to fifteen yards. The reasoning which led to this practice is sound. By taking a snap-shot at a pheasant at short range you either killed the bird or missed him altogether, and, in the latter case, you still had your left barrel to be used before the bird became a long shot.

This habit of snap-shooting is no doubt a very bad one ; it is condemned on every side, and when a Shanghai shooter comes back to the old country, his methods are looked upon with surprise by his friends at home. All the same, on the plains of Kiang-soo, there is a very keen pleasure in bowling over the noble cock pheasant at short range. It may be wrong to do so, but, to quote Mr. Pembridge—

“How sad, and bad, and mad it was,  
But yet, how it was sweet.”

But, bad or good, it certainly was done, and I know, by measurement, of pheasants having been killed at twelve yards from the muzzle of the gun, and even less ; for, in the bright sunny and windless days of November and December, the pheasant will not get up until you almost tread upon him. He then rises, as it were, between your legs, and when you knock him over there is

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no "run" in him. If you let him go until he is twenty-five yards away, there is the risk of your only winging him, in which case, in the absence of a retriever, he is certainly lost, in such coverts as we had in China. At thirty-five to forty yards, the pace of the shot is lessening; the back- and wing-feathers of the Chinese pheasant are very strong, and the shot at long range will glance off his back, especially light shot.

This was the reason we used heavy shot—No. 4, No. 3, and even No. 2, being preferred to the orthodox No. 6. The difference between shooting the Chinese pheasant and the English driven pheasant is that, in the case of the former, you seldom or never get the overhead shot. In the case of the driven bird, the *high* shot, the charge strikes him in a part of the body which is quite unprotected; in the case of the Chinese pheasant it is nearly always a following shot, and the charge strikes him where he is best protected. Therefore, though the English driven pheasant is more difficult to hit, he is easier to kill; the Chinese pheasant is easier to hit, but more difficult to bag.

It has been objected that, if you hit a pheasant at such short range, you will blow him to pieces. So you would if he received the whole charge, but he never does. He only receives the edge of the pattern; but the pellets which hit him are

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going with such great velocity as to kill him in every case, and without mangling him.

With regard to long shots, I think that firing at a pheasant at over forty yards should be avoided as a general rule, because the chances are against killing him, though you are almost certain to wound him, in which case he is bound to die a miserable death. There is one long shot which ought to be especially avoided, that is when the bird is flying straight away from you. In this case, if you fire at over forty yards, though it is almost impossible to miss, it is very difficult to bring the bird down. What happens generally, is that he flies on with a wag of his tail, and the shooter thinks that he has missed. But that bird is almost certain to have received some pellets in his hind quarters, which are unprotected, and he is a dead bird. I have verified this on several occasions. In the Nar-doo country, where there are no creeks, and where, for that reason, you can reach any part of the country without circuitous wanderings, I have picked up a dead hen pheasant in the open, at a place where I knew that some of the party had been shooting on the previous day. She was quite sweet, and had evidently been dead for only a short time. I notched her bill with my penknife, and took her back to the boat, where I opened her, and found three or four

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foreign (not Chinese) pellets in her entrails, whilst she was quite untouched everywhere else. I have done the same thing on four or five similar occasions, and it seems conclusive. It was in every case a hen, from which I infer that the tail feathers of the cock had given him protection.

The shooting-boat, or house-boat, was fitted with a cabin (house) to live in ; it contained two bunks for sleeping, and all the necessary appointments for toilet, etc. There was a kitchen in the stern, and considering the limited space in which the cook conducted his operations, it is astonishing what excellent meals he provided. A shooting party usually consisted of two foreigners, a boy, and a cook before mentioned. The crew consisted of a *lowdah*, or skipper, and seven coolies. The boat was propelled by sail, by *yuloe*,\* or by tracking, according to circumstances. Some of the coolies acted as game carriers when the shooting-ground was reached, and when the boat was made fast to the bank. Besides these, if you happened to have a boy who understood something about sport, you took him, and if you had dogs, there was also a dog-boy.

It was very confusing to a Griffin to understand how the boat was successfully navigated when it got into a tight place, because at such a

\* A kind of large scull, which is used from the stern.

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time all the coolies shouted orders to each other and to the lowdah. Trouble sometimes did occur, the difficulty was to see why it was ever avoided, such was the apparent confusion. On one occasion, after one of these tumultuous scrimmages through a native city, when the row had been unusually deafening, the owner of the boat summoned the lowdah and said, "My have thinkee my have catchee one piecee lowdah seven piecee coolie ; now my savey my have got seven piecee lowdah one piecee coolie." This sarcasm was quite lost upon the lowdah, who retired with a blank stare, and yelled vociferously as soon as he got out on deck.

The boys before mentioned, who have some knowledge of sport, are very useful. They serve as an intelligence department, they inquire as to the whereabouts of the game, and the places to avoid ; they can mark where a wounded bird has fallen, and can render assistance in many ways. They take an interest in the work, which no coolie ever does, and they sometimes evince sympathy if your shooting is indifferent, in the same way that a keeper at home may do, not forgetful of a coming tip. On one occasion, one of these henchmen, after a shameful miss made by his master, gravely shook his head, saying that he thought the "gun no plover." Another one, after the

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bird had flown away, being clean missed, remarked, "My thinker have littee spilum," meaning that the pheasant was hit. Nor were these remarks and others of a similar nature dictated entirely by the base desire of currying favour with their masters ; these boys took a genuine pride in the prowess of the hong to which they belonged, and were willing to invent excuses if the master was not shooting up to his usual form.

For these excursions everything had to be taken from Shanghai in the boat, nothing was procurable up country except chickens, eggs, and of course, rice. Fish was to be had, but of an inglorious kind, scarcely fit to eat. It was therefore necessary for the sportsman to carefully overlook the entire outfit, to see that nothing had been forgotten, before the start. Personal belongings were an easy matter ; you took good care that your boots, clothes, guns, and cartridges were in proper order, but when it came to provisioning the boat, it was not so easy to overlook the boy, and it practically had to be left to him. The house-boy is a careful man, and seldom omits anything ; but he is human, and there are times when he forgets. There is a story of two sportsmen, who, after dinner on their first evening in the boat, were preparing for cigars, when the boy suddenly appeared, and said, "You wantchee



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coffee?" The travellers replied with that easy gratification which comes of a good dinner, that they would like some, "Coffee no got," promptly returned the boy, with an impassive countenance. The sudden answer seemed so inconsequent, and so much like a practical joke, that they were taken aback, and thought it was impudence. But it was not so meant; the boy had only just discovered, when the orthodox time had come for making coffee, that the coffee had been forgotten.

Towards the end of a long trip, say about the sixteenth day, the provisions generally began to fail. It would be then that on coming to breakfast and finding a very small allowance of butter on the table, the boy, in answer to your demand would say, "Butter have finish." By-and-by, he would reappear and say, "Tea have finish," and later, "Bacon have finish." Unaware of the calamities in store for you, you would go out for your day's shooting, and at dinner the boy, who had apparently been taking stock of the provisions during the day, would say, "Bread have finish;" and after a pause would add, "My thinkie tomorrow everything must finish." For it is the nature of the boy to give no warning, but to announce the facts as he discovers them. When the provisions give out, it is needless to say that it is time to get back to Shanghai.

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The ways of the lowdahs as regards their foreign masters vary a good deal, though they all have a family likeness. This latter is shown in their desire to avoid as much as possible giving way to the foreign man's desire to get on. They would, all of them, like to anchor or moor the boat every evening at sunset ; and after long discussions in their quarters at the rear, to turn in, and snore comfortably till daylight. The foreign man, as a rule, will not allow this, and brutally forces the lowdah and his miserable coolies to work all night as well as all day, so that he may get to his hunting-ground with the least possible delay. The lowdah and coolies have to give way to what they consider a perfectly insane hurry on the part of the master, and it must be admitted that, having given in, they work as a rule very well, much better than in most other parts of the world. It must also be admitted that the work is very hard.

To tow a heavy house-boat during the night along a tow-path, which is a mere footway, and which runs up and down the bank, and which, every now and then, is barred by a small creek or waterway, to be jumped over or waded, is toil of a very trying kind. I have, for the sake of testing it, once taken a part in the tow-line of my own house-boat ; and I found that after a couple

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of miles, I was very glad to knock off, it having been about the hardest work I had done for some time. What my three Chinese companions on the tow-rope thought of my performance I do not know ; but when I left the line to go back to the boat for ease and luxury, one of them said, with a grin, "Sin-koo," which means "Toil and labour."

The lowdah who remained for the longest time in my service was always a source of much amusement, though without any intention of humour on his part. He was unusually tall for a Chinaman, being nearly six feet ; his clothing was always the shabbiest and the most ragged of any of his crew ; and he was, or had the appearance of being, the dirtiest and most disreputable Chinaman on the boat. My shooting companion called him a mouldy-looking scarecrow, and the name was justified. His knowledge of Pidgin was of a rudimentary character, so much so that it was difficult to understand what he meant when he said anything, and it was difficult to get him to understand what was said to him. Yet that lowdah, in spite of his grotesque appearance, was a capable and even brilliant captain of the craft he commanded. He was ready, alert, and self-possessed ; he took more than his share in the hard labour of working the boat ; and he, for these reasons, had the entire respect of his coolies.

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One of his peculiarities was that there seemed always to be a head wind ; and he got so much into the habit of using the term, that if you asked him a question referring to quite other matters than the weather, he would commence his reply by saying there was a head wind. This habit of his was well known to all my friends. I once lent the boat to one of them, to whom I despatched the lowdah for orders, as is usual. My friend sent back a note saying, "Thanks for sending me your lowdah. He has already informed me that there is a head wind."

He was, however, a skilful navigator, and if you did not mind the discomfort, he would sail the boat against any head wind somehow by beating, provided that the tide was not against him.

He was a good lowdah, and he knew it. He used to give notice of leaving my service about once every six months ; and, as far as I could understand his language, he seemed to be on the point of being made a commander of a gunboat ; or even an admiral in the Chinese navy. Such an appointment would have necessitated a new suit of clothes and a thorough washing ; but for some reason or another his promotion never came, and he remained in my service until I left Shanghai for a run home.



**THE CHINESE PHEASANT  
AND OTHER MATTERS**



## CHAPTER X

### THE CHINESE PHEASANT, AND OTHER MATTERS

“Torky : sinister influence of a birth-mark.”

“**A**MONG the good old families in pheasant land it is the thing to regard his breed—*Phasianus torquatus*—with genteel aversion. The ring round his neck is looked upon as the birth-mark of all that is bad. His immigrant forbears are supposed to have been convicts and ne’er-dowells, banished from their Eastern home. His roving, impatient spirit, his intuitive excellence in woodcraft, his inclination to live by his wits rather than embrace the respectable profession of dying as a tall rocketeer, and the shameless multiplicity of his ephemeral amours, have earned for him the name of being bold, bad, and quite unrespectable.

“Torky, the boldest and handsomest cock on the whole estate which was nominally his home, was pondering his season-instinct one bright mid-October morning. The love-making days were over ; his numerous brood, which he never



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deigned to recognize, had grown up, and experience warned him that the time was at hand when he must needs avoid coverts and beware of men and dogs.

“A rustle in the bracken attracted his attention; a twig snapped curiously, and the sun glinted on something unnaturally bright. A believer in leg work, he was soon away to visit one of the inside coverts, where a lot of the birds, old and young, had assembled in the thickest part of a deep wood. Up to this, covert life had been all food and play; but now, said the old cock who was speaking, the shooting season had begun, though for awhile they would be safe if they kept the bounds carefully, he went on to tell them how to behave as sporting birds, to fly high and fast when flushed. ‘Rot,’ interjected Torky, who had been listening with his head on one side, and a funny twinkle in that red-framed eye of his. The elders were highly indignant at the interruption; the young ladies blushed and glanced furtively at the handsome intruder; the dowagers and involuntary mothers-in-law sniffed.

“‘It’s all rot,’ repeated Torky. ‘I’ve heard the same nonsense talked for two seasons, and have seen its effects. Old Jabbercock croaked the same old saws last October, and I, watching the sport from safe cover behind the noise men,

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saw him tumbling down anyhow with his exquisite garments torn to shreds. Fools, again you intend to crowd in these coverts, and when the smock men come along you will run ; and when you find strings with feathers spinning on them in the way, you will fly up through the trees and over the tops and across the field of flying fire, and then you will crumple up and fall dead, or else flutter on to linger until a fox or a stoat becomes your best friend. I keep away from these coverts in those days, and potter round the open country, along hedgerows or in bracken ; when I am hunted I run ; if pressed too hard I rise, but always as far as possible from the noise man, and with a tree or hedge between us. If surprised in a covert I lie until the smock men pass, or run back between two of them. I roost alone in the middle of a dark clump of firs high up, and near the trunk, so that a night man cannot see me. I keep my eyes and ears open constantly, and know that there is safety in loneliness during the bad days. If a staring dog comes along I run, and keep my eyes away from him, for to look at him means deadly terror. Cha-caw-caw, good morning.' ”—*Daily Mail*, London, October, 1905.

I was about to commence writing a few lines on the subject of the Chinese pheasant, when the article, from which the above is an extract, caught

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my eye. It is clever and apt. The fertile imagination of the writer furnishes a clue to the notions which, without doubt, are always influencing a pheasant in the presence of his foes.

All pheasants, as we know, prefer running to flying. In a little work, named "Our Country's Birds," by Mr. W. J. Gordon, it is stated that "the pheasant never flies if it can help it ; it runs along with its tail horizontal." We also know that he is cunning and plucky—a bird of great resources, combined with boldness. And I think it may be truly said, in agreement with the talented writer in the *Daily Mail*, that of all pheasants Torky is the handsomest, the boldest, the most cunning, and the gamest. It may also be noted that this author is only referring to the Chinese pheasant as acclimatized in an English covert, and has evidently no knowledge of the bird when at home in China. The special virtues, or vices, of Torky are, without doubt, toned down by his residence amongst his gentlemanly relatives of the *P. colchicus* family, as well as by intermarriage with them ; and he may not retain that "roving, impatient spirit, that intuitive excellence in woodcraft," derived from his wild ancestors in Cathay. It seems likely that the semi-tame life on the English estate changes his nature to some extent ; and it seems to me that the ringed bird in England

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is easier to kill than his brother of the Yang-tsze valley.

Though the pheasant in China will run before you, refusing to rise when he is wide awake, on bright, warm days in November and December, between 11 and 1 o'clock, he will lie so close as to almost allow you to tread upon him. He will, if you pass near him, wait until you are past, then get up behind you, making it a difficult shot, because of your coolies. He seems to make it a point to rise where you least expect him ; in fact, he seems to be actuated by much the same ideas as those described by the author of "Torky ;" and that description is so excellent that it has saved me the trouble of putting much the same ideas on paper.

With a good dog—pointer or setter—the task of circumventing Torky becomes much easier. For, supposing you are walking across a field of beans, late in October, your dog ranges before you, till suddenly he stops dead, having scented the game. You proceed to the spot, at the ready. The pheasant, as described by the author of "Torky," is in deadly terror. He has been in a state of comfortable repose, his morning meal is finished, and he is digesting it, as a gentleman should, in bright sunlight and warmth, at ease with all the world. If he were human he would be smoking a cigar. Suddenly, without warning, except the

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rustle of the beans, which he is too lazy to notice very much, he is confronted with the sight of a large creature, quite strange to him, but of terrifying appearance, who is staring at him with a fixed and unnatural gaze. The writer in the *Daily Mail* describes the bird as in deadly terror. I should prefer to express the state of the pheasant as being one of paralysis. He cannot move as long as the dog remains at point. The remarkable thing in this drama is that the dog is also paralyzed. From generations of training, hereditary instinct prevents him from moving as soon as he has scented the game. If, therefore, the shooter chose to pause, the state of paralysis of the pheasant and of the dog might be prolonged for some time. But the man says, "Hold up," and the human voice breaks the spell. The dog runs in, and the bird is forced to rise; the result which follows depends upon the extent of skill displayed by the man.

Though the pheasant breeds all over China, his home is practically the Yang-tsze valley, and especially the Shanghai plain, or, as it is sometimes called, the Yang-tsze delta. The reasons why he flourishes and multiplies in this region to such an extent are, the great fertility of the soil, giving him plenty of food, the abundance of water, and the excellent climate.

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The delta of the Yang-tsze differs from the deltas of other great rivers in one remarkable way. In most of them—say, in the case of the Nile, from which the name is derived—the stream divides, and falls into the sea by a number of separate mouths. In the case of the Yang-tsze there is really one mouth, which falls into the Pacific to the north of the tract of country known as the delta. Practically no water leaves the main stream to flow over this extensive tract of country, so as to find its way into the ocean by a separate mouth. At Tan-too, the entrance of the grand canal, scarcely any Yang-tsze water leaves the river, and in consequence the canal is a mere ditch until you get past Chang-chow, where it is supplied by water from other sources. At Kiang-yin, and at all the other openings, from the Yang-tsze to the country south of it, it is the same; very little water passes direct from the great river into its delta. But when you get clear away from the river, there is plenty of water everywhere, both in the creeks and in the big lakes. The further you travel south from the Yang-tsze the greater is the bulk of the water in the creeks, until you come to the Great Lake, the Ta-hoo. This lake is between fifty and sixty miles from north to south, and about the same from east to west; and though it is shallow, not more than ten feet deep it is said,

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the mass of water must be very great. In addition to the Great Lake, there are the See-ta Lake, and many others of lesser size ; and the creeks themselves broaden out. At places they widen so much as to become practically small lakes, and collectively there is a very large extent of water in this region.

With the exception of those creeks adjacent to the Yang-tsze, and to the Hwang-poo at Shanghai, the water is all clear.

There is always a current, at certain places sluggish, and at others rapid ; and the current is always in the direction of the river Hwang-poo, at Shanghai.

The question naturally confronts you, as you travel in your house-boat, over these long stretches of clear water, Where does it all come from ? We know for the best of all reasons, that none of it comes direct from the Yang-tsze. We also know that such a large quantity of water cannot come from the usual drainage and rainfall.

The only conclusion possible is, that there are countless springs, which supply the clear water ; and it seems probable that these springs are themselves fed by Yang-tsze water filtering through the soil at a short distance below. It seems probable also, that in pre-historic times, the whole of this region was under water, and presented much the

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same appearance as the estuary of the river outside Woosung does at the present day. The bare-looking hills and mountains scattered over the country, would then have looked like the islands now seen in the estuary—the Saddles, Gutzlaff, and the others. The actual mouth of the river would then have been at Chin-kiang, as the country to the north would also have been submerged ; that part of the province suffering from the uncontrollable waters of the other great Chinese river, the Hoang-Ho, which found its way into the ocean at a spot comparatively near to the mouth of the Yang-tsze, until quite recent times (1852).

We have seen in our own day, the formation of the mudbanks in the Yang-tsze and in the Hwang-poo ; we have seen them grow from mere shoals, entirely submerged at high tide, and just visible at low water. We have seen them increase until they became islands covered with reeds, when no tide covers them ; such as Gough Island and Bush Island. We have seen the Chinaman take possession of them, and settle upon them. It does not require any great stretch of the imagination to picture the time when this great and fertile plain of Shanghai was itself submerged, but was growing slowly and surely, out of the yellow waters of the great river. We can picture the



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prehistoric Chinaman, in his extremely cranky sampan, made fast alongside a newly formed mud-bank, and fishing for his livelihood, much as the present-day Chinaman does. We can imagine him, when the mud bank became sufficiently solid, building a mat-shed and settling down in it, with his wife and family ; and his sons, or his grandsons eventually building some crazy-looking cottages, and becoming a typical dirty Chinese village community. In the winter they would cut down the reeds, and use them for thatching their hovels, or for fuel, just as they do now. They would dredge the bottom of the shallow water round them, and put the black mess on to their soil, and grow cabbages, etc., just as they do now. And they would probably manure the ground in the same way as they do now. We can imagine this going on all over the district, for countless generations, until the country began to assume something of the appearance it presents to-day.

The configuration of this region is something like a triangle, with the apex at Yang-tsze Cape ; and the base on the watershed from Chin-kiang on the north to Hang-chow on the south. The two sides of the triangle are formed by the Yang-tsze, and the Hang-chow Bay, the estuary of the Tsientang River. The northern part, which is much the largest, is the southern portion of the province

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of Kiang-soo ; the southern part is the northern portion of the province of Che-kiang. The whole plain is extremely fertile, probably the richest agricultural country in the world. The silk industry alone is estimated at over fifteen millions sterling in value, though no statistics are available, owing to the fact that, though the export of raw silk, waste silk, and piece goods, is duly recorded by the Maritime customs, the large native consumption is absolutely unrecorded. Next in importance to the silk are the crops of cotton and rice, both of them maturing in the autumn. In the spring, there are the winter wheat, the rape, and sundry other crops. Besides, there is the live stock. Sheep can be reared only in this favoured district, as, owing to the nature of the grass to the south and north, no sheep can live either in Fo-Kien and Kwang-tung to the south, or Shan-tung and Chih-li to the north.

Fertile and prosperous as is this country to-day there are evidences that it was even more flourishing in A.D. 1850 ; and from that date, until the Tai-ping rebellion. The Tai-pings swept the whole of China. Starting in Kwang-se, under a leader who called himself Jesus Christ, with about a dozen lieutenants, who were styled "Wangs," or kings, the rebel army marched from west to east, defeating the imperial troops,

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such as they were, on every occasion, arriving at last at Nan-King. Here, they destroyed the famous white porcelain Pagoda, and as far as we know, there were scenes of massacre and every kind of atrocity unequalled in the history of the world. From Nanking, Jesus Christ and his Wangs went east, destroying and pillaging as they went.

At Shanghai they were met by a mere handful of Englishmen ; who, with the aid of the navy in port, and with their backs to the Pacific, gave the great rebellion its first check ; and it was in this neighbourhood, many years after, that Gordon finally made an end of it.

In the seventies all this region showed signs of the havoc wrought by the rebels. Nearly all the fields were out of cultivation, and were overgrown with wild grass and weeds, swarming with pheasants. The big cities remained, with their walls standing, but a mass of ruins inside. The small towns had been wiped out, and little remained except heaps of bricks. These ruins, however, gave unmistakable signs of the previous prosperity of the country. The better class of houses had been solidly built, with granite doorposts and pillars, all beautifully carved in the Chinese style, showing that they must have been inhabited by men of wealth and culture.

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The first time I came upon one of these ruined towns I was very much impressed. I went into a sort of courtyard, which may have been the ante-room to a yamen ; the kilins\* carved in granite were overturned, and the pillars lying about any way. The roof was gone, but the walls were standing, and the entire floor was covered with undergrowth. I was pondering over the departed greatness of the place, oblivious for the moment of the purpose of my expedition, when suddenly there rose all round me, and almost simultaneously, some eight or nine big pheasants with a tremendous clatter of wings.

The birds must have watched me come in, and I expect they were lying low until I went out again, but my stopping to gaze about me, and my stillness, must have frightened them. The surprise and the clatter were not conducive to straight shooting ; but the next time I wandered amongst ruins I was more alert. It does not pay to fall into a state of sentimental abstraction if you want to kill "Torky."

\* A "kilin" is a mythological animal, probably founded on the lion.



# **THE DANGER IN SHOOTING**



## CHAPTER XI

### THE DANGER IN SHOOTING

**I**N a previous chapter I ventured the opinion that the Chinese pheasant is easier to hit, but more difficult to bag, than his English relative. Visitors to Shanghai who have gone up country for a shooting trip, with good dogs and everything well organized, usually took an even stronger view, namely, that he is an easy bird both to hit and to bag. But a friend of mine, who is a well-known sportsman and a capital shot, has combated the idea, contending that, on the whole, the Chinese pheasant is more difficult to hit, and certainly more difficult to kill than any other.

Whichever view is correct, there is undoubtedly one reason which makes all shooting in China more difficult than it is on an English estate. This is the presence of the natives all over the country, and the fact that they are so often difficult to locate, owing to the thickness of the covert and their skulking habits.



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If all the country were broad and extensive fields of grass, beans or what not, where the shooter could see all round him, and when he knew that as he is firing high there can be no danger, it certainly should be easy work. But such conditions are rare ; how often it is the case that there are mounds, graves, and sloping banks, to say nothing of creeks and small straggling covert, around the shooter in every direction. And it is in such places, on account of the shelter, that pheasants love to lie.

Imagine yourself in a grassy field of no great extent, with two big mounds or graves one on each side. The pheasant which you will most likely flush there will almost certainly fly low over one or other of the mounds, and when you draw trigger there is always the danger of peppering some unseen Chinaman. At the bottom of a sloping bank it is even worse, and such places occur continually in a day's shooting in these provinces. This risk is well known to every sportsman in China, and it makes him careful. Mr. F. A. Groom, in his able little work, "The Sportsman's Diary," writes, under the head of "Accidental Wounding," "This is a misfortune to which the most careful and experienced shot is at times liable, for the country people will lie *perdu* in the most unlikely spots, jumping up at the very

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moment that the trigger is pulled." Which of us has not had this experience ?

The results of wounding a native, male or female, may be so serious, that the ever present danger does not conduce to that steady nerve and that calm demeanour proper to a sportsman. I believe that nearly every man who has shot in China will agree with me, that if that risk did not exist, or if it only existed to the extent it does in an English estate, his shooting would be greatly improved.

There is one little bird, of which the shooting involves greater risk than is the case with any other game. This is the Bamboo partridge (*Bambusicola thoracica*). He lies very close, and when he is flushed his flight is rapid and low, so that it is rarely that the shooter ever gets a really safe shot at him. As the bird was always comparatively scarce, all sportsmen were anxious to bag him whenever they could, so that they usually took the risk in preference to letting the bird escape. The partridge never rises singly ; there is always a covey of twelve to fifteen, or even more, which makes the shooting difficult.

Another little bird, which when flushed flies very low, is the quail (*Coturnix communis*). He is, for that reason, a dangerous shot if there are many natives about, but he is nearly always found

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in the open, so that the risk of accidental wounding is lessened. Besides which, very few shooters took the trouble to fire at quail, because they were so plentiful, and because the shooter who was after pheasant generally had No. 4 shot in his gun.

The Chinese hare (*Lepus sinensis*) is not very plentiful, but if the sportsman has the chance, he should not fail to kill it, because it is a very toothsome dish for the table. It is very small, the weight being three and a half to four pounds. It is interesting to note that there are two species of hares in the Yang-tsze Valley ; " the range of each seems to be strictly bounded by the river, one being plentiful on the north bank and the other on the south " (F. W. Styan, in " Boat and Gun "). The hare to the south of the river is the Chinese hare above mentioned ; that to the north is larger and more like our English hare, having black points and white tips to the ears, and the upper surface of the tail black. This is the *Lepus swinhoei* ; it weighs four and a half to five pounds, and Mr. Styan says he thinks they often run bigger than that.

There is no danger of any accident in shooting any of the goose or duck family, because they all fly high. The only trouble which can occur is, if a shooter of the Duffer or Tinker class should mistake a flock of tame duck for a flock of the

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wild species on the water, and, in his anxiety to secure a bag, should let fly into the "brown." This, I understand, was actually done on one occasion, and the perpetrator did not hear the last of it for a long time. When it became known in Shanghai, printed expresses were circulated in the settlement, "Who shot the old woman's walkee\* duck?" which puzzled the public until they heard the story.

If any sportsman is so unfortunate as to wound a native, there is only one thing to be done—to face the matter boldly. Mr. Groom, in his book, makes several suggestions, all of them sound, with one exception, as to the best course to be pursued; but the actual way in which the accident happens nearly always differs from any previous experience, which renders all advice from books of little value. As a rule, the trouble comes from the rowdy element of the local population, which sees a chance of making money out of the foreigner, and which is noisy and aggressive for that reason. If the sportsman can speak Chinese, the risk of serious trouble resulting from accidental wounding is immensely lessened; but unfortunately very few of the foreigners who go up country to shoot can do so, and still fewer can understand the local dialect.

\* In pidgin, a wild duck is called a "fly duck;" a tame one, a "walkee duck."

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The best plan, either in the case of accidental wounding, or in any other case of damage done by the foreigner to the native, which results in a row, is to get the Chinese mob to understand, if you can do so, that you are willing to pay. They are very poor, and five dollars is to them a large sum. If you cannot speak Chinese, you have always your coolies with you, who may have some smattering of pidgin ; and as a last resource you have pantomime, or the language of signs. Mr. Groom suggests that, if the natives seem to be extortionate, you should persuade them, if possible, to adjourn to the boats and talk it over. With all deference to Mr. Groom's great experience, this is the last thing I should advise. The natives are suspicious, and might think you wanted to bolt ; damage to your boat is easily done by an excited mob, and there seem to me to be many reasons for settling the matter at the place where the accident occurred. A good plan is to despatch one of your coolies to the boat, with a note to your boy, who, when he comes to you, can translate your pidgin into Chinese, and facilitate a settlement of the trouble. When the matter is finally arranged, go back to your boat and move it at once several miles from the neighbourhood.

A friend of mine, who spoke the language, told me the following story. He came to a

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certain part of the country where he noticed signs of hostility on the part of the inhabitants, for which he could not account. He had to pass through a considerable-sized native village near his boat. He did not take any notice of the repeated cries of "La-lee-loong" and "Yang-Kway-tze,"\* though he knew that they meant mischief. But when the natives began to throw things at him, amongst others a brick or a tile, he knew that matters were serious ; so he faced round, and strode up to the biggest and most respectable-looking Chinaman in the crowd, holding up his right hand. His action stopped all the noise for the moment, which gave him the opportunity of addressing the big Chinaman, and the mob at the same time.

"Why is this ?" he said. "What is the meaning of this abominable rudeness? I have always been told that the Chinese boast of their politeness, yet here I find you behaving like a pack of outside barbarians.† I have done you no harm. Where are your manners ?" and some more to the same effect.

This appeal to their sense of propriety and behaviour had an instant effect. The big Chinaman turned to all the little boys in the crowd, and

\* La-lee-loong = thief ; Yang-Kway-tze = Foreign Devils.

† This is what they call us.

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abused them with the choicest Chinese oaths and at great length. He then turned to the foreign master, saying the trouble was entirely caused by these ragamuffin boys, who did not know any better. My friend, who was a man of sense, knew that there must be some reason for the row, so, peace being restored, he entered into conversation with the tall native, the mob pressing eagerly round.

The cause of all this commotion was, as he speedily learned, that one of his own boat coolies had bought a fowl from a villager, and had paid only about half the price agreed upon, giving as a reason that if the villager made any more objections the *great foreign master* would come with his gun and kill him.

There is no doubt that your own servants often take advantage of their countrymen under the shield of the foreigner's prestige. Mr. Groom says : "*Ill usage of the natives by one's own boatmen.*" This is a fruitful occasion of offence to the people, the boatmen being always only too ready to rely on the presence of foreigners to steal vegetables, fruit, fuel, or any other articles that come convenient, and even to rail at, and bully, other boat people whom they meet on the canals." Of course the foreigner always does his best to prevent this, but his want of knowledge of the

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language is a serious handicap in his attempt to do so.

The natives, in all probability, regard the foreign master with great respect. To these simple and very poor country folk he must appear like a prince. His clothes, his guns and dogs, his sumptuous boat, and the ostentatious luxury of the whole equipage, must give them an idea of boundless wealth and superhuman power, and it is not surprising if they believe in the lies which the servants of this great being tell them.

The only serious trouble I ever had was caused by the improper behaviour of my own crew. It happened in this way. I and my shooting companion were returning to Shanghai after a long trip up the Grand Canal, where we had been shooting in the then choice regions of Pen-nu, Pee-jow, and Mow-san. We had just passed round the important city of Woosieh. Beyond the walls, for a considerable distance, there are suburbs on each side of the canal, and, as is usual, the canal itself was lined with native craft. It was about six in the evening, and the lowdah was sailing the boat along the fairway. Suddenly we crashed into the native boats, and stopped. A hubbub commenced instantly, to which we listened without concern, well knowing the Chinese habit of making a noise. The row gradually increased



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in intensity, minute by minute, until there seemed to be a species of pandemonium all round the boat; a nerve-shaking gong was sounded, and whistles blown, and my friend remarked that there was going to be trouble. As he spoke, a bamboo boat-hook was thrust through a shutter, and broke a window, sending the glass all over my bunk. We both ran up the steps to the deck in very quick time, to confront a howling mob, and the matter looked serious.

We climbed over the top of the *house* to the after part, where the turmoil was the worst. Here I found the cook engaged in throwing boiling water upon the foe, driving them to frenzy. Giving him "one" over the side of the head for his pains, we both clambered down into the nearest native boat in the middle of the row. My friend was in the Consular Service, and spoke Chinese, but I, not being a Sinologue, could only use pidgin and the language of signs. Our advent alone had a pacifying effect on those in our immediate neighbourhood, but the noise was so great all around that for some time our efforts were of no use, in fact the disturbance seemed to get worse. Meantime, the natives were demolishing all our shutters and windows with boat-hooks, and I regret to say that the fair sex, in this business as well as in screaming, were far more active than the men.

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My consular friend, however, saved the situation. He climbed to the highest point he could on the boat, and shouted without ceasing in Chinese, "We are good men, we will pay," "We are good men, we will pay," nothing else. For a while this seemed to produce no effect, but gradually the deafening uproar seemed to lessen; the old women stopped screaming to a certain extent, and the magic word *pay* seemed to be doing its peaceful work. Very gradually the commotion subsided, and after perhaps ten minutes or a quarter of an hour we both of us clambered over the various boats and got ashore for a palaver. I am not able to say what took place at this peace conference, but the penalty we suffered was ludicrous after such an infernal row. We agreed to pay *half a dollar* (about two shillings) for the damage done to the native boats, and the matter was settled.

Our own people were very indignant at our paying anything at all, because their countrymen had smashed all our windows and stolen our boat-hooks; but their indignation gave way to surprise very shortly. We held a court-martial, during which we discovered that by bad steering and general mismanagement our crew had smashed into the native boats; that they had immediately attempted to get away without attending to the

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outcry from the damaged boats ; that they would probably have succeeded in doing so had they not been sailing, but that dozens of hands seized the boom and ropes, which frustrated their amiable intentions. They received unlimited abuse from my consular friend, who called the lowdah a "Wong-pa-tang,"\* and consigned the whole of his ancestors and those of the crew to nameless horrors ; but it did not avail, as the mischief was done. The trouble really came about because the lowdah was only a substitute, and the reverse of skilful, our own skipper being sick.

It was freezing hard, so we had to nail up towels and other things across the windows. Whether it was the cold, or the shock to our nerves from the rumpus of the evening, we both slept badly ; my comrade turning from side to side, saying that he had a sense of impending disaster. During this cursed row, from beginning to end, we had been absolutely calm and almost indifferent ; but after it was over we seemed to realize the danger which we had escaped ; and our systems had suffered from the shock to the extent of depriving us of our normal quantity of slumber.

Besides being so useful in averting trouble, a knowledge of Chinese adds very greatly to your

\* A Chinese expletive, having reference to a turtle.

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interest and amusement when up country. The ideas of the Chinamen are so different from those of Europeans, and their methods of expressing themselves, when translated literally, are so quaint as to afford a constant source of mirth to any one who has a sense of humour. In going up country, the pleasure is not entirely in searching out and killing game; there is also the congenial companionship of your European friends, and the amusement to be derived from the Chinese by whom you are surrounded.

Your retainers take a keen interest in your bag; the amount you bring back to the boat being an evidence of your prowess, and to the credit of the party to which they belong. On one occasion, I returned with a poor bag of winged game, but with a deer; and my consular friend, who had got back before me, overheard my boy eagerly demanding what I had got. My game coolie replied, "With regard to pheasants he has but few. *But—he has a deer.*"

On another occasion this same friend and I had been shooting together all day; at about 4 o'clock p.m., we called a halt, as we were a little uncertain as to the whereabouts of the boat, and it was necessary to make inquiries. One of the coolies, who had been staggering along behind us, with ten or twelve pheasants on his bamboo-

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carrier, threw his burden on the ground, exclaiming with a groan, "As for me, I absolutely can go no further;" adding, after a short pause, "bitter." Poor devil, my sympathy went out straight towards him. He had had none of the excitement of the sport to sustain him; his lot had been to tramp after the foreign master carrying an ever-increasing burden of game on his stick; and I could easily imagine his weariness, both of soul and body. I at once promised him a drink of gin (to which the Chinese are very partial), and after five minutes' rest, he shouldered his load, and trudged patiently the remaining four or five miles to home. When we got back, the dram of gin was not forgotten.

Here is another instance of the weariness of the long-suffering game-carrying coolie seeking to find relief. We two had been shooting in company all day. For some reason my friend was shooting badly; nothing went right, it was not one of his good days. I, on the contrary, shot well, and in contrast to him nothing went wrong. My friend was too good a sportsman to utter a sound, but I knew that he was much put out by his want of success, as was natural. It was late in the afternoon, when one of his coolies said something to him in Chinese. My friend rounded on the miserable Chinaman, and assailed

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him with a string of what I knew to be scorching profanity. When it was all over, I asked my friend what the coolie had said. "He said," replied he, "the countrymen begin to tell me that we are thirty lee\* from the boat." I asked him what he had said in reply. "I said, Blank the countrymen, Blank the thirty lee, Blank the boat, and Blank you." The coolie, who was weary, had only tried to call his master's attention to a fact very necessary to be known, and this was the reward he got. However, the coolie gained his object, we turned at once to make for home.

At China New Year, pheasant shooting ends, but the pursuit of wild fowl goes on as long as the sportsman likes to go after them, up to the middle of March. Certain men have made the pursuit of this game outside Woosung an earnest sport; and Mr. Duncan Glass has contributed to Wade's "Boat and Gun" a most interesting article on the subject. All that we Griffins ever did in this line was what was named by some wag the *Woosung crawl*. This consisted in walking along the foreshore, outside the sea-wall, and attempting to kill the duck by stalking them, and by means of a wire cartridge. It was attended by more or less success, generally less. Some of the duck were always close in shore and not very

\* A Chinese "lee" = one-third of a mile.

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wild. There was absolutely no cover for us to take advantage of; and the *crawl* consisted in a crouching stealthy advance in the open, so as to get as near to the duck as possible. When they got up, we at once rose erect and fired both barrels, aiming as best we might. A wire cartridge will kill at eighty yards, perhaps over, and we used to get some duck now and again. If they allowed us to approach as near as sixty yards, we always had a fair chance, but if they rose at seventy or eighty, we fired all the same. One enthusiast made a number of cartridges in which the shot was mixed with liquid tallow; but the shot in that case travelled almost like a ball, and he did not meet with any success.

When the wildfowl shooting is drawing to an end, the sportsman turns his attention to the winter snipe, which affords excellent sport during the month of March. When you get into a really good marsh, or series of marshes, the quantity of snipe you flush is astonishing, and fifty cartridges seem to melt in a very short time.

The following is from Mr. Styan's article in Mr. Wade's very valuable book, "Boat and Gun." Common snipe; winter snipe.

*Gallinago celestis.*

*Scolopax gallinula*—Linneus.

"This is our winter bird, identically the

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common snipe of the British Islands. It is found throughout Europe and Asia. The birds which breed in the British Islands and Northern Europe spend the winter in Europe generally and in Northern Africa ; those whose breeding-grounds are in Central and Northern Asia pass southwards to India and Ceylon ; whilst our birds, after breeding in Eastern Siberia, are in winter scattered throughout China and Japan, the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula. Thus although the common snipe is plentiful enough in China in winter, its numbers are largely increased during the spring and autumn migrations. Birds from the south begin to arrive in the Yang-tsze Valley in March, and are most abundant in April when the pin-tailed and Swinhoe's snipes put in their annual appearance. The winter bird is rather earlier both in arriving and leaving than either of the two other species ; but by the end of April, or a few days later, both those which have wintered with us and those which have come up from the south have passed northwards to breed, and do not return till the autumn."

The pursuit of the spring snipe does not resemble that of any other kind of snipe. The bird is not so fond of low and swampy country as are the other species ; he prefers the cover which grows on the high ground. Nor does his



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flight resemble that of the winter snipe, he does not rise so high, nor fly so fast.

The weather is, as a rule, very fine at the end of April and early in May ; the air is fairly warm, but quite fresh ; the birds you kill are much better worth bagging than any other species, and taking it as a whole, this description of snipe shooting is the most enjoyable of any. When the spring snipe has departed, the shooter, if he is wise, will himself carefully clean his gun and oil it thoroughly before putting it away, as there will be no more use for it for the next three months, and those three months carry enough moisture to rust a gun beyond repair if not properly looked after.

**A FEW TRAVELLERS' TALES**  
**—ALL TRUE**



## CHAPTER XII

### A FEW TRAVELLERS' TALES—ALL TRUE

**A** *RECORD bag of Teal and Widgeon.*—A party of four sportsmen made a trip to the Hoochow and Maychee country, which was a region much favoured by the various kinds of wildfowl. They journeyed in two shooting-boats, two sportsmen in each; and, as is usually the case, there was every day a friendly rivalry about the day's bag, boat against boat, with a mild bet. One day the boat which had so far come off the worse of the two, had made a particularly good bag for the day, having brought back, let us say, sixty head of game.\* This pair of shooters returned to their boat before their companions, and during the period of changing their clothes and general toilet, were congratulating themselves and each other on their success, and were quite

\* Game, in those days, as regards counting the bag, included everything except quail, and the serrated duck, such as Merganser, Goosander, etc.

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confident of, on this day at any rate, dishing their comrades and winning their bets. On the return of the other pair, who were the late Mr. George Coutts and the late Mr. Edward Tobin, they hailed them with derisive and arrogant greetings, being assured that they had topped the bag ; but as they were speaking, their hearts sank at the sight of the game coolies staggering up with immense loads. Mr. Coutts, after the pause necessary to get on board, inquired with ominous calmness what the derisive and arrogant ones had got, and on receiving their reply "sixty head," told them, with the deliberation and quiet indifference resulting from the assurance of victory, that he and his comrade had bagged about double that quantity.

Forthwith the story of the record bag of "Tealee Duck" \* was told. The two sportsmen had been shooting all day in company, and had met with fair success, having bagged between them somewhere about what the other boat had done, namely, sixty head of various game. About dusk, as they were on their way back to the boat, they suddenly came up to a field of paddy,† from which, at that season, the crop of rice had been

\* In pidgin, the entire family of the smaller duck, such as teal, widgeon, etc., are called *Tealee-duck*.

† Paddy is the name for rice as a growing crop.

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taken, leaving only the decayed stalks of the paddy, with a little water lying about. This field was entirely covered by teal and widgeon, so much so as to make the landscape black with birds. The distance between the sportsmen and this big lot of wild-fowl was, perhaps, fifty yards. Without hesitation, they both fired their right barrels into the *brown* on the ground, and as the birds rose, they let them have the contents of their left barrels. They picked up on that paddy field no less than fifty-nine birds. Mr. Coutts himself is my authority for this story, and it is also recorded in Mr. Wade's book.

*A shot at close quarters and its result.*—I was shooting in company with another sportsman at a place where the pheasants were somewhat packed. At a certain grassy nook, sheltered by a copse, about a dozen birds rose all round us. I observed my friend fire at very close quarters ; I should say the pheasant was not more than six yards from the muzzle of his gun. He bowled it over, picked it up, gave its neck a twist or two, and threw it to his coolie. Just as it touched the ground, and as the coolie was moving to pick it up, it flew away, much to the surprise of my friend. Of course that bird had been clean missed, but the charge must have passed very near to it, and was travelling with so great velocity as to stun it.

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*Chinese Sportsmen.*—It has been my fortune to run against these in the field only once. There were two of them, one armed with the match-lock or gingal, the other armed with a very long and tapering bamboo, and he was evidently the beater. He was carrying a few pheasants killed that morning. I stayed in their company for a while, being extremely interested in their methods of sport. I saw them kill a pheasant, and this is how it was done. They were in native clothes, and shod with straw sandals, and they made hardly any noise as they moved. The beater seemed to stir up the grass and small covert in all directions with great skill, until at last he stirred up a pheasant, apparently by actually touching it with the tapering point of his long bamboo. As the bird flew the shooter blew his match alight, applied it to the pan, and firing from his hip knocked the bird over. The match was a piece of native cord unravelled so as to become tinder ; it smouldered all the time, and when the pheasant rose he blew it into flame as quick as lightning. I had a good look at his match-lock, his powder and shot, and all his appliances. The powder was like dull black dust, resembling powdered blacklead without the lustre. The shot was iron, and the size varied in his bag from our No. 1 to our No. 10. The other “appliances” in his bag were

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chiefly string and a species of cobbler's wax. The match-lock was an extraordinary looking weapon, reminding one somewhat of the guns of the past you may see in the old curiosity shops of London. Though ancient, it was well looked after and was clean. It had a very long barrel, tapering to the muzzle. The stock was a kind of club, from which it was evident that it was not intended to be fired from the shoulder.

The pan was merely a circular depression, with a touch-hole in the middle, no gunpowder remaining on the pan for the reason that the sportsman always carried his gun tilted up, so that the powder would run off to the ground.

The beater had in his bag a *patent retriever*. This was a piece of lead about two inches long tied to a string or cord of considerable length. The pheasant they had killed fell into a creek, and the beater got it ashore by means of this contrivance. He threw the lead with consummate skill into the water just beyond the floating bird, and hauling the cord in smartly, lassoed it and gently brought it ashore. Foreign sportsmen, myself included, have made use of this invention, using a cartridge instead of the lead. The difficulty we had was to properly judge the distance and to throw the cartridge just in the proper place beyond the bird.

In Mr. Wade's book, "Boat and Gun," there



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is an article contributed by Mr. Kum Ayen, a well-known Chinese sportsman, on the subject of Chinese methods of shooting and trapping game, both at the present time and in the remote past. Under the heading "Firearms," he writes—"The ordinary matchlock, or gingal, consisted, as it does even to-day, of an iron barrel, five feet long, with a bore of about one-third of an inch; the iron is thickest at the breech and tapers gradually towards the muzzle. The bore at the breech is about the size of a half-dollar coin, at the muzzle about that of a five cent piece. This narrowing of the bore gives a greater velocity to the charge, and anticipated by more than a thousand years the choke-bore guns in which English makers so pride themselves to-day. The barrel at the breech is provided with a small aperture, into which a bit of iron plate is inserted, and serves the purpose of a pan. The stock of the matchlock is made of wood, and shaped like the handle of a carpenter's plane. Percussion caps are not used in native firearms, but ignition is effected by a smouldering match-rope or joss-stick."

On the subject of shot, he writes:—"The natives melt a quantity of iron and pour the liquid metal from a height on to a stone laid in a tub of water. When cool the pellets are collected and

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sorted according to size, but not passed through sieves, as is the foreign custom. Hence the great irregularity in the size of the pellets."

Again, "It must be borne in mind that the native rarely shoots ground game, as, from the fact that he carries no ramrod and uses no wadding, he is obliged to carry his gingal at a high angle, otherwise the shot would roll out."

All this confirms what I saw. I spent about half an hour in the company of the Chinese sportsmen, and when the time came to go on our several ways I gave them a cigar apiece, and we parted with expressions of the utmost goodwill.

*A Jamb of Boats.*—To vary the monotony of the start for a shoot up the Grand Canal, when, before the advent of steam launches, two or three days were wasted in travelling, we hit upon a new idea. This was to send the boat, fully equipped, up the canal to Chin-kiang, several days beforehand, we shooters going by a Yang-tsze steamer at the appointed time, and joining the houseboat at the junction of the canal with the river. The idea was to obviate the tedious journey up the canal, to avoid the noise and general discomfort of passing round the walls of the great city of Soochow and its suburbs, and the equally noisy suburbs and approaches of Woosieh, and the still worse clamour and evil smells of Chang-chow.

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The plan was carried out, and we commenced shooting twenty-four hours after leaving Shanghai, thinking what clever chaps we were. But we had not taken into account a certain city named Tan-yang, which we were bound to pass in order to reach the best shooting-ground.

As we approached this place we noticed that navigation became increasingly difficult because of the great numbers of native craft, and at length, in sight of the walls of Tan-yang, we became wedged in a mass of boats, numbering several thousands, extending as far as we could see. This occurred about sunset. We thought, naturally enough, that we should get through somehow, as it was not the first time we had been in a *jamb*.

Next morning, when we went on deck, we found to our surprise we were at just about the same spot as we had been on the previous evening, but with this difference, that during the night hundreds of other native boats had come down from the river, and were jammed behind us. So that there was now no possibility of retreat ; we were surrounded on all sides.

We summoned the lowdah, and asked him *what thing more better do*. He replied, "*Have got jamb no can walkee, but you can go shore shootee.*"

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We followed his advice, and when the time came, we got ashore and did our day's shooting.

We stayed in the *jamb* for two days, and the native boats on all sides of us remained almost in the same position as on the first evening. During the period, we became acquainted with the inhabitants of all the neighbouring craft. We fraternized; my companion conversed with them in the vernacular, and by his natural genius adapted himself to their ways of thought, abstaining from using the romantic Chinese oaths. All the boat-folk around us were simple and friendly, and before we parted we were close allies. We gave them presents of European trifles, and they in return gave us what they had, onions, garlic, and other stuff, which we accepted out of politeness. We performed our ablutions and general toilet on deck, stripped to the waist, and this was considered by our neighbours an especially friendly act, partaking of the nature of a turn in a variety performance. The greatest good feeling prevailed.

The two great events of the day were our getting ashore in the morning and our return at night. To get ashore we had to clamber over six or seven or more boats in the *jamb*. If it had been only ourselves and our game-coolies who had to land, it would have been a simple matter, nothing more than clambering from one to another

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of these cranky craft. But there were the dogs. For an hour before we were ready to start, the dogs in their kennels were at the extreme stretch of excitement, barking, howling, whistling, whimpering, and tearing at the bars of the door. When the signal was given for the start, the dogs were put on the chain ; but they jumped at once into the nearest boat dragging the coolies with them. They jumped on the top of the women, upsetting their kettles and pans, scalding the women and themselves with boiling water, and struggling wildly to get free. As soon as they could they scrambled into the next boat, where the scene was repeated. Perhaps one of them would fall overboard, and cause more confusion by his frantic efforts to get back. The women were screaming, our coolies shouting, and all our surroundings in an uproar until the dogs were got ashore. When that happened these animals would stand blinking, with their tongues hanging out, as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

The sporting dog, especially the pointer and the setter, is the clumsiest animal possible when on board a boat. He seems to be unable to see where he is going ; he easily loses his balance and tumbles into the well of the boat, or tumbles overboard. He will perch himself as far as he can in the fore part of the deck, adapting himself

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very badly to the motion of the boat, until he finally (of course) falls into the water. His misadventures never seem to bring him any serious trouble, and are a source of excitement and mirth to his master. "The dog is the friend of man."

In the evening, on our return, a similar scene took place, except that the dogs were tired. They clambered over the boats, however, much in the same way, fell into the bottom of each boat with a howl, and tumbled over everything they could ; but it was tame compared to our departure in the morning.

You might suppose that the occupants of the boats would have resented this daily invasion with its disturbance and commotion ; but they did not. They recognized our right to land in this way ; and the general public seemed to think that the passing of the foreign dogs was another turn in the show or entertainment got up for their benefit, and nothing we did disturbed the harmony of our relations. If any of their crockery were broken, we compensated them many hundred-fold by gifts of *Yang-dien*,\* and I do not think any of the women got scalded, their wadded clothes protecting them. Perhaps they liked the row ; it made a change in their otherwise monotonous lives.

The way we got out of the *jamb* was perhaps

\* *Yang-dien* = foreign money.

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the most interesting part of the whole adventure. During the two days we had spent there, we had all been moving very slowly onwards, and we knew by the landmarks that the entire mass had made headway to the extent of, say, two hundred yards. At this rate of progress it might take us another fortnight to get clear; and we were thinking whether it would not be advisable to try to get assistance from the Tao-tai or the Foo-tai—for a consideration, of course.

The assistance came, on the evening of the second day, from the Chinese authorities in an unexpected way. A mandarin boat, shining with a new coat of varnish, and with many streamers flying, came into view at the back of the *jamb*. This event caused the greatest excitement among the entire boat population; there were anxious mutterings. "Ta jen lai la" \* was whispered on all sides. We watched these proceedings wondering what would happen. It looked impossible that the big mandarin boat could force a passage through the mass without smashing a great number of them or driving them ashore and up the bank.

At length a deep-toned gong was sounded on board the official junk. The effect of this sound upon our neighbours around us was indescribable.

\* Ta jen lai la = the great man is coming.

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It stirred them all into active motion ; they became like a nest of ants. It was like the effect produced on a flock of wildfowl on the water by the appearance of a hawk above them ; the whole community was in a twitter of excitement. They all got out their poles and boat-hooks ; they pushed and yelled ; the big mandarin junk loomed up behind them, ghostly and menacing in the fading light, and the terrifying gong sounded about once every minute. Wonderful to relate, the whole mass began to move ; the word had been passed to the boats in the front part of the block, and the sound of the gong had reached their ears. Frantic efforts were made ; and in about an hour after the arrival of the *Ta-jen* we were free. During the two days we had moved about two hundred yards ; during the last hour we had moved the remaining eight hundred, thanks to the gong.

When we were clear we waited to have a look at the official boat. We learned from the coolies that the mandarin was no less a person than the Tao-tai of Chang-chow, near which city we were going to shoot. Thinking it advisable to make friends with the great man, we sent him a bottle of champagne, with our compliments and names written in Chinese on our cards. In return we received the card of the mandarin—a red paper—with his thanks and compliments and a basket of



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fruit. We had no trouble whatever during our stay in the neighbourhood ; and it is likely enough that our immunity was to some extent due to the fact of our having made friends with the *Ta-jen*. Our lowdah and our coolies would without doubt make the most of it ; they would boast freely that we were distinguished foreigners under the special protection of the Tao-tai, in virtue of which we possessed his *carte-de-visite*. And their bragging most likely reached the ears of the local officials—the Ti-paos, Chih-siens, and the rest of the scoundrels.

# **THE CHINA PONY**



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CHINA PONY

**T**HOUGH the pheasant is called the *Chinese* pheasant, the pony is called the *China* pony. In the same way, though we talk of *China* tea, *China* silk, and *China* ware, we always speak of *Chinese* literature, the *Chinese* classics, and the *Chinese* mandarin. How these distinctions commenced, and why the terms were used in that way, I cannot guess ; but at the present time it would be quite as incorrect to call the animal in question a *Chinese* pony, as it would be to call the human species a *Chinese* man.

In many respects the China pony resembles the Chinaman. For one thing they are both the reverse of handsome ; of the two the man is the uglier. I do not mean to say that there are no good-looking China ponies, nor any good-looking Chinamen, but they are exceptions. The average of both the biped and the quadruped is decidedly ill-favoured.

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The China pony is something like a sheep, his nose rounding off in an ignoble fashion. He is not unlike a camel. In disposition he is like a pig. He also resembles a jackass and a mule in many ways. He is like a cat for climbing. He has some points in common with all the second-rate quadrupeds in creation; the one animal of his own particular family to which he bears the least resemblance is the English thoroughbred.

He is born and reared in Mongolia, and he passes the first four or five years of his life in a district called Lama-miaou, where he is supposed to subsist upon earth and rocks, with what grass he can find by way of a relish. His stomach being cast-iron, this diet does not kill him, but it makes him poor. The best ponies are sent down to Shanghai and the other treaty ports for sale, where they fetch much higher prices than any Chinaman will pay. They are all geldings; the mares are never sent for sale, but are jealously secluded in their native wilds.

When they arrive at Shanghai, in a *mob*, they are almost like wild animals. They used to be sold by auction without any trial, so that it was somewhat of a lottery for the buyers. This plan entirely suited the genius of the residents; it gave an extra spice of speculation to the transaction,

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which they loved. It also handicapped to a large extent the big stables ; it prevented the racing man with the long purse from securing all the best ponies. It enabled a sportsman without much capital to use his knowledge of the merits of a pony ; and a man who had an eye for horseflesh could purchase a *crack* for a comparatively small sum. Thus the late Mr. Claude Rees, between the years 1872 and 1877, bought a large number of racers, nearly all of which did well, and amongst them was the famous *Teen-Kwang*, which was the fastest pony up to that time, and which, I think, was never beaten. This record-making pony was bought at auction, without a trial, by Mr. Rees, for a hundred and sixty taels (about £40).

The China pony, like the Chinaman, has great merits combined with his vices, and is, on the whole, a remarkable beast. His average height is thirteen hands one inch, but his withers are low compared with most other ponies, so that his general build is fully equal to a cob of fourteen hands or more. He possesses great strength, great endurance, and fully as much pluck as an Arab. He can carry a man weighing eleven stone and more, with a saddle weighing ten pounds, across country after the hounds or after paper, for a run of eight or ten miles, going full sped, and jumping or climbing over all obstacles ; and this

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is, I think, a feat, which very few other ponies of his height can do.

My first introduction to the animal was very shortly after my arrival at Shanghai. Some documents had to be taken to the Custom House to be stamped, and they were wanted back without delay. The usual plan with such documents was to send them by a coolie under cover with a chit book ; but that meant, as a rule, a delay of one or two hours, because our coolies were devoid of ambition ; time to them, as to all celestials, was of no account, and the Customs' officials were—well, they were Customs' officials. So the tai-pan asked me to take them myself, to ensure getting them passed in good time, telling me that the pony-carriage was at the door. I went down and found the carriage and pony waiting ; the latter a quiet-looking beast. As I got into the trap the ma-foo \* said something to me in pidgin which I did not understand. I took the reins in my hand and lightly felt the brute's mouth. To my surprise he immediately jibbed, and backed steadily, the ma-foo holding on to his head and pulling him the other way. At length he backed into the wall, and I heard the wood-work at the back of the trap cracking. The ma-foo now shouted *Leggo*,† and I understood that I was to slacken

\* Ma-foo = horse-boy.

† Let go.

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rein, which I did. After a short pause, during which the horse-boy was coaxing him, he bounded forward and rushed on at a gallop, the ma-foo getting clear somehow, and clambering up behind. It was a near shave through the gates and at the corner of the Sze-chuen Road ; but the animal quieted down after this, and took me to the Custom House without mishap.

Notwithstanding the imposing presence of a foreigner at the counter of the Imperial Maritime Customs, it took nearly half an hour to get those permits stamped ; and when I got back to the pony I found him very restless. Understanding by this time that I must not touch his mouth, I nipped into the trap, holding the reins absolutely slack. Off he went at once at a great pace down the Bund, the horse-boy jumping clear and climbing up behind. From thence to home was quite easy work ; it was only the start which caused trouble. The tai-pan thought little of my adventure, telling me that the pony was the *Nanking Pet*, an old racer, who had a few tricks. This trick of starting at full speed was his only serious vice, though he was also a man-eater.

Later on I and my fellow-labourer adventured on the backs of a couple of mokes.\* Being not

\* *Moke*, which means in slang a jackass, used to be applied to the much-abused China pony, probably on account of his sloping nose.



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very flush of money, we arranged with the captain of the Volunteer Artillery for the loan of two ponies, which belonged to that distinguished corps, and which dragged the guns about during the drills and parades. As may be supposed, these nags were not first-class, but they were reliable. They were not fliers ; but we did not want fliers—a flier would have been too much for us. On our first expedition across country, when they came to a jump, they both stopped dead, and seemed to smell it. They then climbed a little way down the bank of the creek, made a mighty effort, and jumped over the water, climbing up the other side of the bank like cats. When they got to the top they stopped for a rest, as if they had performed a remarkable feat, until we urged them by heel and arm to further exertions.

My companion was a man six feet two inches in height, and he never took the trouble to mount his steed in the usual way ; he used instead to take a flying leap into the saddle, nearly knocking the pony over every time. We both fell off our ponies, on an average, at every third jump, but we never hurt ourselves. The ground was quite soft, and it is not far to fall from the saddle of a pony. I need hardly say that both our steeds were *Lao-she*.\* We learned early in our

\* *Lao-she* = quiet.

## THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

proceedings that we must not, on any account, let go the reins when we fell off. There is no doubt this cross-country riding, with its jolting and tumbling, gave us good strong seats, but whether they were graceful I am not able to say.

My first introduction to racing was in partnership with the aforesaid Mr. Claud Rees, a personal friend. I had absolutely no experience, but Mr. Rees had plenty, and supplied enough *savey* for both of us. Indeed, I think that he preferred a good-tempered ignoramus for partner to an experienced but contentious sport, because he had undisputed control over the stable ; and I, for my part, was only too pleased to be able to learn the mysteries of pony-racing from such a skilful trainer. I was a *larn pidgin*, and was quite content to keep in the background until I knew something about the subject, which is not so very easy. My partner was kind enough to consult me ; but I do not think he paid any attention to my recommendations.

When all the griffins we wanted were purchased we put them into active training forthwith. We used to go to the Horse Bazaar every afternoon ; my partner would talk to the ma-foos and head-boys, giving them all sorts of instructions. Of course we looked at the ponies and the ponies looked at us ; they sometimes did more than

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that, they would run at us and try to bite. In the morning the whole stable went out at 6.30 for the regular exercise ; we two partners on our hacks, and the griffins mounted by *ridcy-boys*. We went round the racecourse or along the road, according to circumstances, my partner with his eyes open to all that went on, and I looking on and drinking in words of wisdom.

We did not do very well over this meeting, barely paying our expenses. This was not owing to any want of capacity on the part of Mr. Rees ; it was simply that our cattle were just a little out-classed by some of the big stables. A little later Mr. Rees left Shanghai for London, and I did no more racing for a time.

But the pleasure given, and the fascination caused, by this form of sport are such that presently I found myself once more in a racing copartnership. This time it consisted of three, one of whom, who had fair experience, acted as trainer. The usual buying at auction was gone through, and after discarding several we found ourselves the possessors of a stable of four promising griffins. There was also a fourth sportsman who owned a pony which he thought very highly of, but which nobody else did. We thought he was just good enough to lose his owner a lot of money if he backed him. He joined our stable, not as a

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partner but for company, convenience, and economy ; so as to be able to have the advice of our trainer, and to race under our colours.

Now there happened a curious thing. Our own ponies, about three-quarters through the training, all became sick, whilst the griffin of the fourth gentleman had so much improved as to become a very hopeful animal. Besides this, the ordinary hack of my partner (not the trainer), which was a discarded griffin from another stable, also improved with the training, and did capital time on trial. Both trials were on the same day.

Next morning, at about 6.30, I saw two very disconsolate-looking men standing on the steps of the grandstand. It was a very cold spring morning, and they looked blue and wretched. They were both dressed in riding costume. I asked them what was the matter ; one replied that "they" would not let him ride his pony ; the other said that "they" would not let him even *see* his pony.

I learned that our trainer had been much impressed by the trials of the previous day, and had decided that with such promising brutes coming on just at the right time, it would be madness to allow their chances to be spoiled by their being ridden at exercise by two such indifferent cavaliers as their owners. So he had put

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up two ridey-boys ; and left my friends without any mounts at all. Hinc, etc.

We brought these two racers quite fit to the post on race day, but by, of course, sheer bad luck, and through no fault of ours, we failed to win a race. This happens to many stables ; it is never the trainer's fault, it is always bad luck.

My own opinion on the subject of training is that the food given to a griffin after his first arrival is too strong, and the exercise too suddenly severe. The animal arrives from the north in poor condition from being half starved on the way down ; he is promptly physicked, put on to racing chow-chow, and given hard exercise. The natural consequence is that unless he is unusually healthy and strong, he gets sick about the fourth week of the training ; and if the training is continued he does not recover, and cannot do his best on the race day. This, I think, accounts for the numerous *kept over* griffins. Mr. Oscar Brandt, as I know, stopped the training of one of his ponies, scratched him for his engagements, and kept him over for the next meeting six months later. He was then still a griffin,\* and was eligible for all the maiden races ; he put the pony in question into training for this meeting, and carried off everything. The

\* By the rules of the race club, a *griffin* is a pony which has never run in any race.

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name of this pony was, I think, Isegrim. I believe that Mr. Meyerink also kept over several griffins.

My next venture was in partnership with another friend, and in this case had I been able to continue the partnership for a season or two after the first, I should have been a first-class owner. But after I had been through one meeting I was ordered home on business, so that I missed my chance. This was the stable that began with *Precedent* and continued with *Prejudice*.

My final venture was a stable which was named the *Du Maurier*. The idea of adopting this fantastic pseudonym was that we should name our ponies after the characters in the famous and at that time very popular book, "Trilby." By this time the entire system of buying griffins had changed. The racing stables no longer bought ponies at auction without a trial; the dealers had taken to trying them privately on their own account, and used to offer what was known as a *timed griffin* for a big sum. I am surprised that this system had not been commenced at an earlier date. If a pony had done his mile against the watch in anything like good racing time, it was worth your while to buy him at a high figure. Of course the new system put a stop to any chance of an outside stable getting a really good pony except at a high price.

Although the new system enabled you, if you

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paid high prices, to get together a stable of very high-class ponies, there still remained the training and the chances that your animals might get sick. This happened to the Du Maurier stable; our best pony *went off*, and though we won one race, and were second for two others, our success was qualified. But we had the greatest enjoyment during the whole time.

In dealing with the China pony you have to look very much alive, because he is nearly always vicious, and sometimes very vicious. Considering that he is quite unbroken up to the age of four or five years, the surprising thing is that he is made so tractable as he is. If a pony is to be broken to harness, the spectacle during the process of breaking is almost comical. A rope is tied round each of his legs, with four ma-foos holding on to them. He is then forced into the shafts of a heavy cart, and harnessed securely. A fifth ma-foo gets into the cart with a whip and takes the reins, and a sixth holds on to the pony's head with a halter. The pony is then supposed to draw the cart. Perhaps he will, perhaps he won't. But all the same the cart is drawn, because the six Chinamen, with much noise drag the pony and the cart. Sometimes there are two more shoving behind. After a few days the pony, who is by no means a fool, thinks he had better submit.

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They are nearly all of them man-eaters, and as you walk along the streets of the settlement it is well to be on the look-out, because a harmless looking beast in a carriage, which is waiting for his owner, with the ma-foo whisking off the flies, may suddenly give you a vicious bite on the arm. Then there is the animal which has been nicknamed the *praying Mantis*. There is a remarkable insect of voracious habits, the *Mantis religiosa*, pretty plentiful at Shanghai, which has a trick of standing upon his four hind legs and holding his two front ones up in the air. When a pony evinces a desire to climb a tree his attitude bears a fantastic resemblance to the insect ; hence the name.

In spite of all his faults, or perhaps in consequence of them, there is no sport to be had in Shanghai itself so good as the riding, racing, and general management of the pony. His vices and his virtues are both interesting ; whatever may be said against the brute it can never be said that he is dull. The Chinaman and the China pony are alike in this respect, as in others, that they have their own habits and their own ways of doing things ; and if the foreigner deals with either one or the other of them in a reasonable spirit, with intelligence, and above all with good temper, he can make them do whatever he wants ; and in certain cases he can make them his devoted and loving servants.





**SOCIAL LIFE, GASTRONOMY,  
AND THE LADIES**



## CHAPTER XIV

### SOCIAL LIFE, GASTRONOMY, AND THE LADIES

"'Neath the wide-spreading tea tree, fair damsels are seen  
All singing to Joss on the soft candareen."

*Attributed to E. C. BABER.*

"Then after ruddy wine and brown cigars  
Had made the circuit of the table square. . . ."

*Ascribed to GRENVILLE MURRAY.*

IT seems ungallant to couple the subject of gastronomy with that of the ladies in this chapter, but nothing in the way of rudeness is intended. On the contrary, it is really a high compliment to the fair sex, though it may not appear to be so, to couple it with the pleasures of the table; for is it not their especial province to superintend all that goes on in the household, of which the central and most important part everywhere in the civilized and uncivilized world, is the meal? Be it breakfast, tiffin, dinner, or supper, where is the house in which these meals are better served, appointed, and cooked, and

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consequently better enjoyed by the half-tamed man, than when a capable woman presides and looks after the *régime*.

I feel sure that, after this apology, none of my lady friends, certainly none who have lived in Shanghai, will resent the coupling of their sex with the very important science of gastronomy.

Amongst the other accomplishments acquired by a young bachelor in China was a knowledge of house-keeping. Not that he wished to learn this eminently feminine branch of art, but he was obliged to do so. Nearly all the women in the open ports were married, and looked after their own households ; there were very few unmarried girls, and they were not available as housekeepers to bachelors unless they married them, which they could not do for want of coin. The bachelors were therefore driven to the mercies of the houseboy, and had to run the mess themselves.

Under the old mess system one man was chosen, following the Darwinian theory, from natural aptitude, from his wish to do so or what not, to be caterer. His messmates took their ease, and, as is customary, abused him roundly if the table was not to their taste. But as time went on and the big messes were broken up, every member of them except the very few who

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married, had to start a mess on his own account. Nearly every man who lived in Shanghai and the other ports in the seventies has had to go through the trouble and inconvenience of learning house-keeping and the management of the boys and coolies.

It was not so difficult as might be supposed, because the Chinamen are so clever as to smooth over inexperience, provided that the foreigner will allow them to work in their own way. He must shut one eye to the *squeeze*. He generally did so if the squeeze was not very extravagant. The Chinese expected to get it; it was, and is, the custom of the country, and as such is almost legalized. The system under another name is not unknown in the old country.

I was so far trusted as to have the privilege of running the mess in the first hong of which I was a member. It was a mess of four, and I was given a perfectly free hand. The house-boy always waited on me in my bedroom at half-past seven in the morning with the previous day's *counter*\* to be passed, and to take orders for the provisions for the future. It did not take me long to discover that he was honest according to his lights, and that though every single article he bought, from rice to woodcock, was subject

\* Counter = account.

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to the squeeze, he did not take an undue toll as things went. During this period of inexperience I used to compare notes with a lady friend, whose kindness in this matter was very great. On looking over my *house counter* she assured me that our house-boy was reasonable, and as I knew, even then, that ladies are much less easy-going with servants than men, I was satisfied that I need not worry myself that the money of the mess would be wasted.

The first impression I had in housekeeping was the tremendous supply of all kinds of food and its great variety. It was not only that the great and fertile plain of Shanghai supplied us with everything needful, but there was the whole coast of China, north and south, sending the products of the maritime provinces by steamer in the ice-box; there were the Philippines and Cochin China, and even far away Singapore with occasional mangosteens. The second impression was the extraordinary cheapness of all articles of food measured by the equivalent of the silver prices in sterling. I have no means of quoting prices after such a long period of time, but I have the full market quotations on one day in 1899, published in one of the daily papers, and I know that the prices in silver were about the same as they were in 1870; that is to say, they did not

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rise until after that date. Mutton (and very good mutton) was then quoted 15 cents a pound, equal at the Exchange of 1870 to  $6\frac{1}{2}d.$  Beef was dearer. Eggs were  $6d.$  a dozen. Fowls were  $6d.$  a pound, capons rather dearer. Game was naturally very cheap in such a game country.

The price list for December 19, 1899, is so interesting that it is worth while reproducing a portion of it. The exchange is given as just under 2s. for the Mexican dollar, making the cent worth about a farthing.

Beef	...	...	15-30 cents = $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $7d.$ per lb.
Mutton	...	...	12-18 " = $3d.$ " $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ "
Lamb	...	...	12-19 " = $3d.$ " $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ "
Veal	...	...	14-20 " = $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ " $5d.$ "
Codfish	...	...	10-12 " = $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ " $3d.$ "
Mandarin fish	...	...	16-20 " = $4d.$ " $5d.$ "
Mackerel	...	...	16 " = $4d.$ "
Pomfret	...	...	16 " = $4d.$ "
Clams	...	...	5 " = $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ "
Crabs (Ningpo)	...	...	10 " = $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ "
Oysters	...	...	\$1.50 to \$4 = 3s. to 8s. per pecul of 133 $\frac{1}{3}$ lbs.
Shrimps	...	...	16 cents = $4d.$ per lb.
Soles (small)	...	...	25-30 " = $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb.
" (large)	...	...	12 " = $3d.$ per lb.
Eggs	...	...	12-14 " = $3d.$ to $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ per dozen
Fowls	...	...	12 " = $3d.$ per lb.
Cabbage (foreign)	...	...	4 " = $1d.$ each
Carrots	...	...	3 " = $\frac{2}{3}d.$ per lb.
Green peas	...	...	10 " = $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ "
Shantung cabbage	...	...	18 " = $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ each
Potatoes	...	...	\$1.20 = 2s. 5d. per pecul
Oranges	...	...	3- 6 " = $\frac{2}{3}d.$ to $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb.



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Pummeloes	...	8-10 cents	= 2d. to 2½d. each
Grapes	...	30 "	= 7½d. per lb.
Milk	...	10-15 "	= 2½d. to 3½d. per quart.

This list is extracted from the price current containing nearly two hundred articles of food and other household necessities.

The list of game was as follows :—

Pheasants	...	60-70 cents	= 1s. 2½d. to 1s. 5d. per brace
Wild Duck	...	50-60 "	= 1s. to 1s. 2½d. per couple
Teal	...	25 "	= 6½d. per couple
Quail	...	10 "	= 2½d. each
Woodcock	...	40-45 "	= 10d. to 11½d. each
Snipe (winter)	...	14 "	= 3½d. each.

These prices seem cheap enough, but there is a significant footnote, which says—

“The prices are those quoted at the shops and by the costermongers, but contracts can be made for fish, vegetables, and game at greatly reduced prices.”

In spite of the cheapness of all articles of food, the monthly bill mounted up to a big figure, and housekeeping in Shanghai was certainly dearer than in England. Against this, however, we lived in much greater luxury than any family could do in England at the same cost ; in fact, a family living on the same scale in London would have to pay a great deal more.

The chief expenses occurred in what was

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known as the store counter, that is to say, pepper and salt, oil and vinegar, sauces, and all the accessories. All these things had to be sent out from England, and the cost was very high compared with everything produced in China. One of my fellow-housekeepers once told me that he was nearly ruined by anchovy sauce, and another one said that the consumption of English ham was turning his hair grey. Wines and spirits are things quite apart from the ordinary cost of a mess. Some messes spent a large sum on wines, drinking the finest champagne and Medoc, whilst others were abstemious, and except on guest-nights drank nothing except water claret, and beer. At this period whisky had not come into fashion, and if a man drank spirits it was nearly always brandy and soda.

In this price list oysters are quoted from \$1.50 to \$4.00 per pecul. These are the oysters which come from Nimrod Sound, near Ningpo, and they are excellent, though not so good as our own natives. They sometimes grow to an enormous size, up to six inches across the shell and more, in which case they are not fit to be eaten unless roasted. They were sold at the bars of the clubs, the hotels, and all public restaurants at 20 cents = 5*d.* a dozen, which is cheap enough, but the market price was cheaper. There is also the small

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*Bamboo* oyster, from Foochow. This is, as far as I know, quite unique. It is reared by placing bamboos upright in the beds; the oyster fastens on to the bamboo, and grows from it. The shell shows the mark of the bamboo somewhat in the style of a fossil. The flavour is quite unlike that of any other oyster, and is to my taste delicious. On account of their small size a great many can be eaten. Yum-yum.

There used to be a good deal of trouble about eggs. The houseboy, doubtless on account of the squeeze, would provide eggs which, though they were not bad, were not fresh. The mess, with that patience characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon, put up with it, simply grumbling. I, as caterer, was more concerned, but nothing that I could say to the houseboy seemed to make any difference. His promises to provide fresh eggs instead of stale ones were always falsified. Every man in the mess had eggs for breakfast, and every man abused me for not getting better eggs.

At length, after a long period of thought, I hit upon a plan. Living in the hong, just over the office, it was no trouble for me to go down without any breakfast, provided that I got my breakfast some time between eight-thirty and ten a.m. So, one morning, when I broke open my egg, I rang up the boy, told him that the eggs

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were bad and ordered two more to be boiled. I then went down to the office. When the boy summoned me, I went back to the dining-room, where I found two boiled eggs no better than the previous ones. I made him boil two more, and repeated the process until he had boiled about fourteen. This was repeated for several days, until the cook got tired of it ; and suddenly, one morning, I found two absolutely new-laid eggs on the table. After this we had no more trouble about eggs for many a long day.

Having gained my point, I asked the boy where he got them. He replied, "*Oh, very long way office boy's mother catchee.*"

The cook did all the marketing as far as the Chinese market was concerned, and his account was called the *Bazaar counter*. The houseboy did everything else, and rendered the final bill for payment every month.

Giving dinner-parties was a very great feature in social life during the whole year, except during the extreme heat. A great deal of time and trouble was taken over these functions ; nor were they wasted, because the reward in the way of success was very great. I may not be believed by people who have never lived in China, but my opinion is that a really well-appointed table out there has never been surpassed anywhere in the

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world in all that constitutes excellence. There was a certain house on the Bubbling Well Road, the owners of which were an American couple, and I was once there at a dinner-party of eighteen or twenty, when the appointments, the table decorations, the flowers, the cooking, and the service were better than anything I have ever seen in London, Paris, or New York. Nor is this to be wondered at ; the Chinese are wonderful cooks and excellent servants, the materials for the banquet are of the best, an abundance of choice flowers for the table equal in quality to those of any of the great capitals, and no lack of money to get everything of the best. If in addition to all these advantages there are a host and hostess, both of them capable and tasteful, it would be surprising if the result were not an entertainment of rare brilliance. *Experto crede.*

With regard to the conversational enjoyment to be derived from these parties, there was great variety. The mercantile element was usually largely to the fore, and though we were nearly all sportsmen, which prevented the talk from being entirely *shop*, it must be owned that conversation was sometimes apt to run in a groove. The few ladies who were there prevented a party from being dull, and there were always the consular men, the naval men, the Continentals, and an

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occasional *globe-trotter*, the presence of two or three of any of them being enough to impart a cosmopolitan tone to the talk, and to raise it above the monotony of local topics. I must not forget to mention the visitors from Hong Kong, Foochow, Amoy, Hankow, and the other ports, whose presence always seemed to wake us up and lift us out of our groove.

As a rule the number of ladies at a large dinner was not more than three or four, the rest of the guests being men. This was unavoidable; the ladies were scarce. Nor did the number increase much for ten years; it was not until 1880 that the census shows much change. At that time the foreign population of the settlement began to rise rapidly, and, of course, the number of ladies increased in proportion. Here are the official figures.

Total of all foreign nationalities, not including residents in the French Concession, nor shipping in harbour, nor the navy—

1870	1876	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900	1905
1666	1673	2197	3673	3821	4684	6774	11,497

It is to be noted that in the census for 1905 the very large increase since 1900 is partly accounted for by the advent of large numbers of Japanese, and Portuguese from Macao.

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When we turn to the census of the women, we find the following—

1870	1876	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900	1905
	296	502	1011	979	1227	1776	3270

But here again the big increase in 1905 over 1900, is partly accounted for by a large influx of Japanese and Portuguese women, amounting to over eleven hundred.

Whilst, therefore, in the seventies it was quite rare to meet ladies in society, in the eighties an entertainer was able to give a dinner-party almost in the London style, where there are sometimes more women than men.

In the seventies one of the great charms of social life was its good fellowship, its easy-going friendliness, and the absence of formality ; and an extra spice was added to the pleasure when the ladies became more numerous in the eighties. For none of the qualities which made social life so pleasant were altered by the doubling and trebling of the feminine element ; on the contrary, the women, both married and single, seemed to adapt themselves at once to the new and almost unique conditions of life in China. I fancy that some of them were shocked a little, and some shocked a good deal, by what they now and then saw ; but they usually had sense enough to say nothing

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about it except amongst themselves, so that there was no trouble.

As an instance of the easy-going intimacy existing—I was in a mess consisting of three men, in the settlement itself, near to the Bund. At about half-past eleven one morning my two mess-mates informed me that they were both going out to tiffin. I had no desire to eat a solitary meal, with a book propped up before me, and with the boys worrying round me, taking away plates and putting new ones, and, generally speaking, trying to get the whole thing over as soon as possible. A solitary meal anyhow is a miserable thing. So I went off to the club, where I found two friends having a cocktail. I promptly asked them to come to tiffin ; they both replied that their wives were in carriages outside on the Bund waiting to take them separately home to the conjugal meal in the country. I asked them would they come if I fixed it up with their wives, to which they agreed. I went out and found the two ladies in their carriages. On learning my errand and accepting my assurances that the husbands were willing, they both consented with pleasure, and when the time came we all went round to the hong, where we had a most enjoyable meal. An impromptu tiffin like this is scarcely possible except in the East.





**A FEW MORE REMARKS ON  
THE SAME SUBJECT**



## CHAPTER XV

### A FEW MORE REMARKS ON THE SAME SUBJECT

"Oh fair are the flowers in her tresses that glow,  
The sweet scented cumshaw, the blue pummelow."

"A sipping the vintage of sparkling Lyche  
And warbling the songs of the poet Maskee."

*Attributed to E. C. BABER.*

" . . . and played the orchestra,  
The valse, quadrille, and galop. . . .

. . . a glowing group  
Of white-tied men and rainbow-tinted girls."

*Ascribed to GRENVILLE MURRAY.*

**I**T has often occurred to me that the position of white women as regards the Chinese is far from satisfactory. The foreign *man* is tolerated because he is a man, and because he generally behaves like one. But the Chinese have little regard for women as all the world knows. They are polygamists whenever they can afford it, and their system of morality in nearly every point differs from ours. Their civilization is the oldest in the world, and they are intensely proud of it.

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I think that the Chinese resent the presence of all foreigners without regard to nationality ; they dislike their pushing ways, their intolerance of delay, and their interference, in so many cases, with *old custom*.\* And although nearly all residents in responsible positions behave with perfect propriety as regards their dealings with the Chinese, there are, alas, too many cases on the part of irresponsible foreigners when they bully, and even brutally assault the almost defenceless native. These things have left a permanently bad effect, which does not conduce to good feeling between the white and yellow races, though the antipathy is more deeply rooted than any feeling caused by acts, and I fancy that the ordinary educated Chinaman regards all foreigners, except his personal friends, as uncivilized barbarians who do not know how to behave, but who come by brute force to the Middle Kingdom for the purpose of profit, and whom they have to put up with.

But when it comes to the foreign woman the whole view is changed. If the native cannot understand the foreign man, he is far less able to understand the foreign woman. Everything she does is to the celestial a breach of all decorum. The views of the Chinese with regard to our women is a most unpleasant subject to write

\* Old.

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about, so that I shall cut it short ; but I think that it may be summed up in this way—the natives think that the natural freedom of our women is license.

If these views are correct, and I am sure that they are not far from it, it follows that the foreign lady's position in her own household is somewhat heavily handicapped, and I think that all ladies who have lived in China will agree with me. It is a fortunate thing for the ladies (and for the men too) that they do not understand the vernacular ; if they did, provided it were not known that they did, they might hear some remarks that would shock them.

There is a habit of the Chinese which is very aggravating to the housekeeper, male and female. This is the persistent way in which the relations and friends of your own servants visit them and stay for the night, in fact, for several nights, in the back quarters. These wretches make a settlement in your premises, bringing their wives and families, and practically living upon you. I used to make periodical raids upon them without giving them warning, and drove them forth ; but as soon as my back was turned they all came back. They were like vermin which flourished in the darkness. If this annoyed a male, it worried a female housekeeper far more, for obvious reasons. There was

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one saving point, that, notwithstanding the colony of Chinese in your compound, there was practically no stealing. I think that the compradore and the houseboy took care for their own sakes that nothing of that sort occurred. They themselves preserved the monopoly in the form of the time-honoured squeeze.

One winter evening, as I was approaching my own hong at about seven o'clock, I saw two ladies standing on the pavement close to my entrance. When I came up to them I found that they were the mistress of a house on the Bund in our neighbourhood, and a young lady friend. The back door and all the back premises of her house were reached by a passage adjoining that leading to my front entrance. She explained that she could not get into her house by the front door, because it was locked and the bell was broken ; and she had not so far summoned up enough courage to face her own back premises. We all three at once went along the passage to the back door, which was not locked, and I went into the house, the ladies following.

I now had an experience which was quite unique. The whole place was almost in darkness, but it was alive with shuffling and scuttling natives. A young girl clad in silks rustled past me and escaped, and stifled noises were heard everywhere.

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We groped our way along a wall until we came to the back stairs, and as we mounted them the same scuttling and rustling went on. It gave me the impression of being in a place full of rats, or in covert where I had surprised great numbers of vermin. I had no matches (foreigners never carry them) or I would have struck a light. At length we groped our way to the door leading into the dwelling-house, when my lady friends were, to their great relief, in their dwelling-house on the topside landing hall.

I never arrived at the meaning of this darkness and flight of the natives. The lady and her husband questioned the houseboy, but his explanation was so involved, after the Chinese manner (it was doubtless intended to be so) that they could make nothing of it. My opinion is that there was something wrong, that the Chinese Colony heard our voices and our footsteps, and possibly thought it might be a policeman, so that their safety lay in putting out all the lamps.

Although the lady was the centre of attraction at the dinner-party, her position in the ball-room was her crowning triumph. There she reigned as a queen, and rightly so. At a dancing-party there were always five or more men to every woman, and every woman was eagerly sought



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after as a partner. She had, therefore, practically her choice ; but her majesty was, after all, the sovereign of a limited monarchy, because there always existed such things as duty dances, which she dared not entirely ignore. But in spite of trifling drawbacks, a young woman in China had a very good time.

There were two big balls given every winter, namely, the Caledonian Ball on St. Andrew's day, and the Mih-ho-loong,\* or Fire Brigade and Volunteer Ball, in January or February. These functions were different from any private dances, because they included all classes of society, as well as all nationalities ; and nearly everybody attended them, for the reason that it enabled the guests to meet people whom they seldom met elsewhere. But in those big balls the disparity in numbers between the men and the women was even more apparent than in the private ones. At a celebration like that of the patron saint of Scotland, every Scot, whether he danced or not, made a point of being present, if possible in a kilt ; and the guests of English and all other nationalities never failed to attend a ball which presented such unique features as the Reels and other dances peculiar to

\* *Mih-ho-loong* means the *Fire destroying dragon*. The name was adopted by the Hook and Ladder Company of the Fire Brigade, an organization largely copied from a similar one in New York.

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Scotland, the characteristic decorations of the rooms, ante-rooms, and passages, to say nothing of the haggis and other Northern delicacies at supper.

In this event, the hosts were entirely Scottish, being members of the St. Andrew's Society. In the other great function, the Mih-ho-loong Ball, the hosts were almost cosmopolitan, being composed of the half-dozen companies of the fire brigade and the various companies of the volunteers of all arms. This celebration was also attended by every one, because it served to bring together the members of the numerous nationalities at a social gathering, where concord was the word of command. On these occasions the venerable and somewhat mouldy-looking banner of the Shanghai Volunteers was displayed on the wall, bearing the date April 25, 1854, when the Corps was under fire at the famous battle of Muddy Flat, of which they were naturally proud.

The attendance at these functions numbered 350 to 400 men, and 70 to 80 ladies; and the question naturally arises, what did the men do all the evening? In the words of the poet—

“ . . . some danced,  
While others at side buffets . . . ”

but they could not stay at the buffet all night. There was always a large majority who did no

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dancing at all, and the first view of the scene was to a new-comer a curious one. While the ladies and their partners were dancing, a great mass of non-dancers stood about the walls and at the doorways, looking on. This they did until they were tired of it, and then they would drift away to the card-rooms and the billiard-rooms.

When a lady arrived, she was escorted by one of the stewards to the cloak-room, and in her progress she was unmolested, but when she emerged from that sanctuary, she was by no means permitted to proceed direct to the ball-room ; a serried band of eager suitors barred her way, and it was not until her card was full, and about six extra dances engaged, that the steward was able to conduct her to the scene of joy. When she got there, she was still not a free agent ; she was pounced upon by the partner engaged for the next dance, and when the dance was over, the partner for the dance following hung about close at hand to carry her off. The intervals between dances were always short, and the dancing men had to look alive in order to claim their partners, so that the ladies had little breathing time. But they were all young and vigorous, and though perhaps they would have preferred in some cases to sit out a dance, it was, under the conditions of Shanghai dances at the time, almost impossible.

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Supper was usually signalled at about midnight, and it was no scratch affair. The Shanghai public thoroughly understood the value of time, and they also knew that there are occasions when time should be no object, so that supper at these functions was a period of joy, rest, and conviviality. There was, besides, the band to be considered; they had been playing all sorts of dance music for three hours, and they wanted supper and a rest more than the dancers did. If any ardent devotees of Terpsichore had finished their supper quickly, it usually happened that some lady would play a waltz on the piano whilst ten or twelve couples would career in a dance not on the programme.

After supper the ladies began to leave, and the attendance in the ball-room thinned; and it was then that those who really loved dancing had their best enjoyment. In the seventies dancing in China was of a very high order of merit, far superior to that of any other country except America. Indeed, it was from the American residents that the China folk had learned the art.

When the ladies had all gone, those of the men remaining, usually a goodly company, repaired to the dining-room for a *second supper*. This was succeeded by speeches, songs, and toasts, and when the finale was reached it was almost daylight. They were all young, and these celebrations were rare,

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so that the dissipation did them absolutely no harm. As a very great writer has said, "Hout ! they're fine lads, and they'll be nane the waur of it." \*

Dancing-parties and dinner-parties occupied by far the largest share of social life, but there were other forms of entertainment. In the way of music there was a very good philharmonic society, amateur of course, but which reached a very high standard of excellence, particularly as regards the strings. The cosmopolitan nature of this orchestra was a striking feature. There were also the Amateur Dramatic Company's performances. A great deal of time and trouble was expended in the preparation of these, and the result was, all things taken into account, very good indeed. The theatre was large and airy, with plenty of seating space, and was supplied with every appliance required to stage a drama of the first class.

A successful Amateur Dramatic Company's performance was an intoxicating triumph for the actors, and an ample reward for all their weeks of labour in rehearsing and preparing the play. When all was over, and when the audience had departed, it was the time-honoured and entirely delightful custom for the entire company to have supper on the stage in the costumes in which they had

\* R. L. Stevenson, "St. Ives."

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appeared. Sundry favoured guests were present besides the actors, the stage manager, and the other officials ; and these celebrations stand out in bright relief, after all these years, as events which all those who took part in them would be sorry to have missed.



# **PIDGIN ENGLISH**





## CHAPTER XVI

### PIDGIN ENGLISH

“ I WENT into the cook-house to have a look round. Lots of noise and sundry conflicting aromas. Had seen my cook once or twice before, and am prepared to swear to him. Found no less than four other men with him that I'd never seen before in my life ; one smoking opium, two asleep, and the other stirring up a stew with a bone. Asked who they were. Was told that one was the cook's cousin, another his brother, another his number-two grandfather, and the fourth his number-two wife's uncle. Told them all to clear out. Perceived a strange smell. Found it came from a great basin full of thick dark stuff. Asked what it was made of. Cook showed me the various ingredients—quite an interesting study. They appeared to me to be treacle, Chinese fat, lamp oil, ditch water, chopped garlic, and flour. Asked him what on earth made him eat such beastliness. He said, ‘ No belong my.’ I said, ‘ Who man chow-

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chow ?' He said, 'Belong you.' Seized him by the tail and asked him what the blank he meant. He said, 'Belong sauce makey pay long that boilem fish.' Made him hold his mouth open and poured it down his throat. Gave him a kick and the sack too. Next day found my cigars missing."

"Puck, Shanghai, 1871."

The above is an extract from a fictitious account of a trial at the Mixed Court, in which the foreign master is suing his cook for stealing a box of cigars, and it appeared in the above-named periodical, which was an illustrated comic paper. Besides being a graphic, if highly coloured, account of a scene which might easily occur, it contains some typical pidgin.

Pidgin, which is the universal medium of communication between the Celestials and the foreigners, except in the rare cases when the latter understand and speak Chinese, is generally admitted to be a literal translation of that language. It is described by one writer\* as a "queer jargon composed of a verbatim translation of Chinese sentences together with a slight admixture of Portuguese and French, etc."

This is correct as far as it goes, though I do not know of any French words, unless the word *savvy*

\* Mr. O. G. Ready, "Life and Sport in China."

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comes from France, which I doubt ; I should think it comes from Spanish or Portuguese. But the language is so curious that it merits a little study as regards its origin. To begin with, the pidgin used by the Chinese in the United States is not true pidgin at all, although it bears a resemblance to the real article. It is much inferior, and I suppose the reason is that the Chinese who went to America were nearly all coolies of the lowest class from the southern provinces, who had never learned pidgin in their own country, and who had to learn English in the best way they could. This they did, and whenever they acquired the knowledge of a word they pronounced it in their own way, which is generally by substituting an *l* for an *r* and by adding a *double e* or a *y* as a terminal.

The date when this language was invented in China, and the history of its construction, cannot be known ; but it must have commenced with the arrival of the earliest English traders. There may have been a pidgin Portuguese long before this ; in point of fact the retention of a number of Portuguese words at the present time seems to indicate that such a thing existed in some form. The advent of the powerful East India Company reinforced the growing language with words from the Anglo-Indian vocabulary—

“Though the *Punkahs* may flash and the *Compradores* gleam.”

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We know, from Mr. W. C. Hunter's book, the "Fan-Kwae at Canton," that pidgin was in full swing at the time he was there (1825 to 1844) as a perfectly satisfactory means of communication, and we can only suppose that it had passed through very many years of development.

To any one who has resided in China and is therefore conversant with the real article, the stuff talked in America comes as a kind of shock. To listen to what I may describe as *American pidgin*, gave me a sensation similar to that I have when I hear the lower classes talking English. This jarring of the nerves led me to consider causes, and I came to the conclusion that American pidgin is devoid of grammar, and that the cause was, as indicated in a preceding paragraph, that the coolies who invented this patois, were themselves devoid of grammar.

The genuine language is governed by the rules of Chinese grammar ; and the difference between pidgin as spoken in America and that spoken in the mother country is nothing more than this, that in the first case the jargon was invented and is spoken by coolies who knew no grammar, and in the second by educated merchants in a very large way of business. The stuff they talk as pidgin in the theatres of London, I pass over ; it is more like Baboo English than anything

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else, and has no bearing on the subject which I am investigating.

It is most probable that the earliest English traders were not merchants of the first class ; they were more likely to have been skippers, super-cargoes,\* and, generally speaking, men of the middle classes. On the other hand, the Chinese authorities were so jealous and so afraid of the foreigners, that they allowed none but the best Chinese merchants to deal with them. The famous Co-Hong of Canton, which consisted of Hou-quā, Mou-quā and others, was an association of the highest commercial rank, and possessed a monopoly of the foreign trade, granted by the Government because it was to be trusted.

When trading commenced, it seems natural that the Chinese who were men of high education and intelligence, and who were in their own country, should take the lead in devising means of communication with their Western visitors, as well as in every other branch of commerce, in which they were and are adepts.

Judging from certain peculiarities of pidgin, it seems that in those early days they must have had Anglo-Chinese dictionaries, possibly compiled

\* The fact that all mercantile assistants were styled in pidgin, *parasers*, seems to indicate this, because the word could only have come from a trading ship.

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by missionaries. They knew their own grammar, and they had the foreign trader to help them to construct a language. If these facts are considered they serve to explain the presence in pidgin of the word "look-see" and the other double words. In Chinese grammar the verb "To see" is doubled, being *Kan Kan* (Giles) or *Kan kien* (Edkins); and the meaning is that a person sees, and perceives that he sees. The Chinaman would look up *Kan* in the dictionary and would find that it meant to see, to look. He knew the necessity from his point of view of doubling the meaning, so that he hit upon the expedient of making a compound word—*Look-see*.

Another feature in Chinese grammar is that verbs are very often used as substantives, and the verb "to see" is one of them. It then becomes, in pidgin, a good *look-see*, meaning a pleasant view, a good-looking man, a handsome pony, or what not. There are many examples of these compound words in pidgin, such as *sing-song*, *makey-do*, *more much*, all of which will be found to have probably the same origin in the double Chinese word.

Another example is the compound word *Bring-come*. In Chinese the characters are *Nah-lai*. *Nah* means to seize, to take in the hand, to catch; and *lai* means to come; and the compound

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word means to take hold of an article and to come with it. The Chinamen probably learned the word *bring* from the foreigner, and following the rules of their own grammar, were obliged to add the word come. *Bring* in English also has a meaning conveying a sense of coming.

A fisherman is termed a *catch fish man* (Edkins). This is in Chinese *ta-ü-tih*, meaning *Catch fish belong*, but they discarded the "belong" in favour of *jen* or *man*, following the other rule of Chinese grammar in which the final of the compound is man, such as "mai-mai-jen," a trader, or "k'eh-jen," a guest.

The three words which are probably used more frequently than any others are "catchee," "belong," and "piecee." "Catchee" is evidently a translation of Nah 拿 and of Tah 打, both of which have a meaning, amongst many others, of "catch," and both coming under the radical Shou 手 a "hand." "Belong" must be a translation of the particle *tih* 的, the sign of the possessive, which occurs in so many Chinese words. For example, *Wo-tih*, which means *mine*. *Wo* is I, and *tih* is possession; the combination becomes in pidgin *My belong*, or *Belong my*.

The use of *my* instead of I is peculiar; it is possibly derived from the English word *mine*. As pidgin is spoken it is more euphonious than I;



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no one could tolerate such a compound as *Belong I*.

*Piecee* comes under the head of significant numeratives (Edkins), the common one of which is *Ko* 個. Thus, *Yih-ko-jen* is *one piecee man*, which is a literal translation. The curious thing about this section of Chinese grammar is that these significant numeratives vary to such a large extent. *Ko* applies to a man and to many other things, but there is a list of about fifty of these characters to be applied to the various substantives. Thus, you must not use the word *Ko*, if you are speaking of a piece of land, in which case you must say *Yih Kwei tu*, or *one piecee ground*; and for a piece of writing the character *Pien* is employed. In most of these significant numeratives the meaning is "piece," or something akin to it, so that it is plain where the pidgin word *piecee* comes from.

The pidgin word "finish" must be derived from the final particle *liao* 了, which means "finished," "fixed," "determined." A *ma-foo* would say, *Allo pony have go walkee one hour more finish*: in Chinese the equivalent sentence would end with the word *Liao*, or *La* as it is pronounced in Kiang-soo. This particle may have given rise to the pidgin particle *Galah* or *Ga*, as in the celebrated expression "Topside *Galah*" (meaning *Excelsior*) in the poem of that name.

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Examples could be given of the probable derivation of all the double pidgin words, but the foregoing are sufficient. There are some which have a meaning different from that in English. For instance, *To sauce* does not mean to be impudent; it means *to bully* or *scold*. The word *pay* has a great number of meanings quite distinct from the English one. *Pay my look-see* means *let me look*. *Makey pay long that boil em fish* means *to serve* (as sauce) with boiled fish. *Pay chow-chow that sheep* is the pidgin translation of the second line in a famous poem "My name is Norval;"\* and the pidgin words *pay chow-chow* mean *feeds*.

The word *mend* has been somewhat distorted from its English meaning, as the following history will show. A gentleman was building a dwelling-house in the suburbs, and during the process the lawn had to be raised, and a mound to be constructed in the middle of the circular carriage drive to the front door. Contracts were made for this work, and when it was completed the *Counter* was sent in thus:—

For mending on high the green field as a hill ... \$475'00

For mending on high the medial as five feet ... \$75'00

I will conclude with a remarkable advertisement which appeared in the form of an "Express."

- \* "My name belong Norval; topside that Grampian hillee.  
My father pay chow-chow that sheep; he welly take care man."

# THE MODEL SETTLEMENT

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